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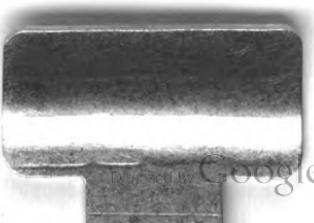


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ARTES SCIENTIA VERITAS



OVER MY SHOULDER

By the same author

EYEWITNESS.

**EYEWITNESS'S NARRATIVE OF THE WAR,
SEPTEMBER 1914 TO MARCH 1915.**

THE GREEN CURVE, under the pseudonym of
Ole Luk-Oie.

THE DEFENCE OF DUFFER'S DRIFT, under the
pseudonym of BACKSIGHT-FORETHOUGHT.

THE GREAT TAB DOPE, under the pseudonym of
Ole Luk-Oie.

**A YEAR AGO, FROM APRIL 1915 TO JULY
1915.**

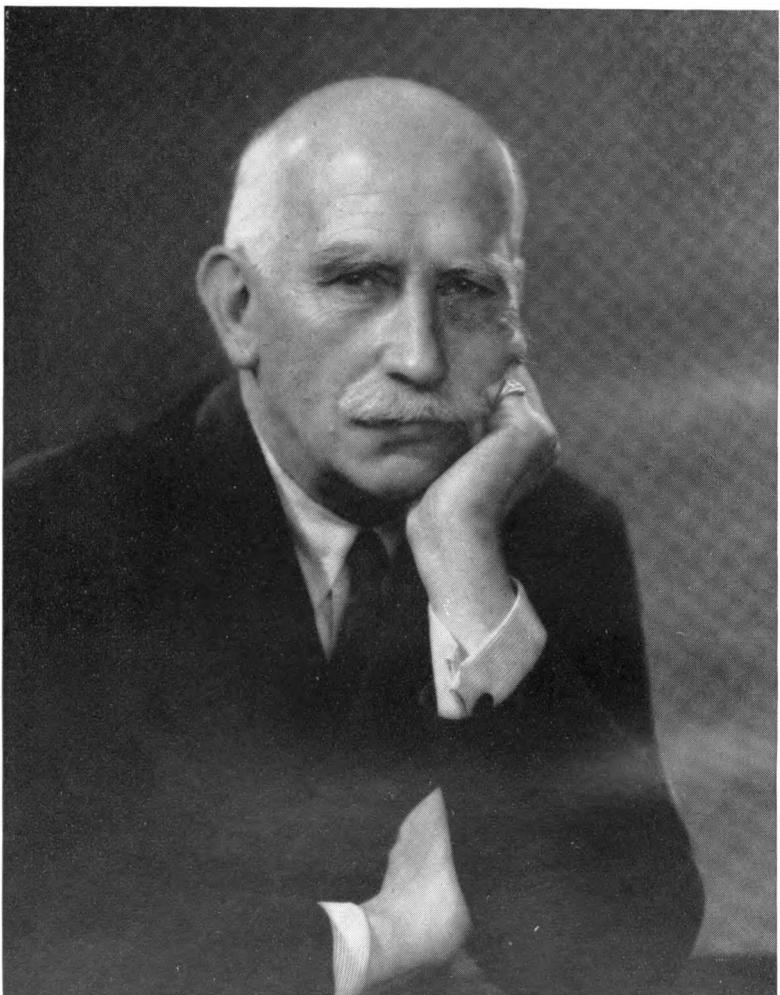
Translations

THE TRUTH ABOUT PORT ARTHUR, by E. K.
NOJINN, in collaboration with the late Lieutenant-
Colonel A. B. LINDSAY.

THE RUSSIAN ARMY AND THE JAPANESE
WAR, by General KUROPATKIN, in collaboration
with the late Lieutenant-Colonel A. B. LINDSAY.

KING ALBERT IN THE GREAT WAR, by Lieu-
tenant-General GALET.

AN EASTERN ODYSSEY (*La Croisière Jaune* by
Georges Lefèvre).



Dorothy Wilding

Major-General Sir E. D. Swinton,
K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O.

OVER MY SHOULDER

The Autobiography of

MAJOR-GENERAL

SIR ERNEST D. SWINTON

K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O.

(*Ole Luk-Oie*)



GEORGE RONALD
OXFORD

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To
MAX FREEMAN
with affection and gratitude

PREFATORY NOTE

IN fulfilment of my promise to General Swinton, I have brought to completion the Autobiography on which he had been working for some time previous to his death.

It was his intention to write two more chapters: one on the Military Mind, and the other on the Army as he had known it for over sixty years.

He had also intended to amplify the chapter on Tanks, and the one dealing with his activities after the Great War up to the time he went to Oxford. He did not live to do this, and I have thought it best to leave the story as he told it. Other alterations he might have made if he had seen his manuscript in print; thereby giving to it the final Master touch.

At the request of many of his friends, I have included in the book his last photograph, taken in his garden at Oxford.

March 1951.

B. V.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my old friend Archimedes (Brigadier-General Sir James Edmonds, C.B., C.M.G.) I owe a special debt of gratitude. I have to thank him most warmly for his invaluable help in reading and commenting on my manuscript, and, with characteristic generosity, placing at my entire disposal his wide knowledge and wisdom.

My grateful thanks are also due to Mr. B. H. Sumner (Warden of All Souls); Dr. G. N. Clark (Provost of Oriel); Dr. E. F. Jacob (Chichele Professor of Modern History); Mr. G. F. Hudson (Fellow of All Souls); Mr. J. A. H. Sparrow (Fellow of All Souls); Professor E. L. Woodward; Sir Arthur Willert, K.B.E.; Mr. Basil Blackwell; Major-General Sir Percy Hobart, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O.; Brigadier-General P. R. C. Groves, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.; and others who have so kindly read my manuscript and helped me with their advice.

E. D. SWINTON.

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CHAPTER I

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

IT was my farewell to India; Brumyah was in tears; and so were my brother Frank and I. I was not six years old, and this parting with our old "bearer" was my first real sorrow.

Our beloved guardian and mentor was a Madrassi, and came next to the members of our family in our esteem. He was one of that large and devoted band of Indian servants whose loyalty to their charges during the Mutiny has become legendary. To those not born and brought up in India it is difficult to picture the bonds of affection which so often united the native servants and the white children entrusted to their care.

I can see the old man now—though it was as far back as August 1874—on the platform of Arkonum Junction, on the Madras railway. Recent pictures of Mahatma Gandhi have reminded me of the frail figure and thin face with the small iron-grey moustache, salaaming in the dim light of the oil lamps as the train carried us out of each other's lives.

We (my father and mother, elder and baby brothers, and sister) were on our way from Madras to Bombay, bound for home, on my father's retirement from India. He was Robert Blair Swinton, one of the Swintons of that ilk—an old Lowland Scottish family—and son of Colonel William Swinton of the Indian Army. My grandfather, William Swinton, was a midshipman in the Royal Navy when he obtained a nomination to the Honourable East India Company's Army and went out to India as an ensign. My father was a judge in the Madras Civil Service, and joined before the days of

the “ competition wallahs ”. He served all his time in what was called the “ benighted Presidency ”, having sailed to India first in 1849 in an East Indiaman which took three months on the voyage and in which the first-class passengers had free champagne at meals on Sundays. Spacious, generous days ! He often talked of this voyage *via* the Cape of Good Hope, during which he was so much taken by the “ sea chest ” in his cabin that after his retirement he bought a similar one which he always kept in his dressing-room at home as a souvenir. Deeply religious, he was a fond and kind father and the most honourable and conscientious man I have ever known. He and my mother were a devoted couple, whose companionship ended only with his death in 1912.

I was born at Bangalore, in Mysore, on the 21st October, 1868—Trafalgar Day—the fourth son of my parents, and am the sole survivor of six brothers, three of whom lie buried in India, two in Bombay and one at Changsil on the north-east frontier, killed in action in September, 1890, when commanding the Manipur Relief Column in the Lushai Expedition of that year. Two of three sisters are still living. My mother was Elizabeth Dorothy Rundall, eldest daughter of a business man in India. Of Bangalore I have no recollections except of the scent of some of the flowers. It was a popular garrison station, with such a fine climate that it was almost a health resort for the British in the Madras Presidency.

My most distinct memories are of Cuddalore, a small civil station, where my father was judge, on the east coast of India, south of Pondicherry. It was close to the ancient fort of St. David, which had been the scene of much fighting between the British and French

in the middle of the eighteenth century, and in which Clive first distinguished himself as a soldier. My brother, just senior to me, and I used occasionally to wander round the nearly dry, deep ditch of the fort, where we once discovered to our delight a stone cannon ball, probably dating back to the latter half of the seventeenth century.

The fort was right on the coast, well above high-water mark. The beach north and south was of powdered shell, a perfect paradise for children. I cannot remember any seaweed. All was dazzling white and clean, and the heavy surf boomed and creamed up the gently sloping strand. There were always some half-naked fishermen plying their trade by net from small craft.

On the backwater behind the fort, my father kept a polished mahogany Rob Roy canoe and a four-oared gig. The latter was painted white and was very smart, with gunmetal rowlocks and leather fenders hanging outboard. The climate of Cuddalore was hot, like that of Madras, but there was always a sea breeze at sundown; and it was especially soothing on Sunday evenings when this breeze blew cool off the Bay of Bengal, to be rowed to the little church half a mile or so up the backwater to the accompaniment of the rhythmic click of the oars, the booming of the surf, the gentle southing of the wind in the casuarina trees, the screams of the gulls, and the distant tinkle of the church bell. The wheezy little harmonium in the church was usually played by my mother or some other memsahib. *Lead, Kindly Light* was a favourite hymn.

There were sharks beyond the surf. We never saw even the fin of one, but we were not allowed to paddle. Life has many illogical contrasts. While we were

carefully guarded against possible danger from sharks, we wandered amongst the ruins of the old fort unprotected from the far greater risk of cobras. Probably our explorations were unknown to authority.

The judge's house was a spacious building in a large garden. Two-storied, it had a pillared verandah all round. There were a couple of staircases, one inside the house, and one outside, at one end. The verandah pillars were white and the outside walls were coloured yellow ochre. It had a handsome appearance, with big mango trees in the compound, in which was a garden well filled with flowers. There was a small circular swimming bath.

At Cuddalore life was serene and uneventful. It was a daily event for us two boys to have the tops cut off our father's and mother's eggs at breakfast. (The Indian hens' eggs were disgustingly small.) An intermittent and fearful joy was the occasional visit on some Hindu festival of mummers smeared with yellow and black stripes to represent tigers. Another exciting event was the periodic arrival of a cask of claret from Pondicherry, followed by the subsequent serious business of bottling and sealing, at which we were allowed to assist—or obstruct? This was not without risk; and my brother Frank carried to his grave the scar of a burn from the bubbling wax. We each had a pony. The name of mine I cannot remember, but my groom was called Nargulu and my brother's Ram-swami. Both were Telugus and we learned to speak their language equally with English. Sometimes we had prawn curry made with fresh prawns brought up to the verandah straight from the sea, with a glutinous vegetable we called drumsticks. One of our forbidden pleasures was to sneak down to the stables and ex-

change our food for the excellent curry, usually made of vegetables, of the grooms, who, being low caste, could eat our fare. At these surreptitious feasts we copied our hosts and ate with fingers, making the food up into pellets about the size of a hen's egg.

There were also hot weather visits up to the hill stations of Cooncor and Ootacamund in the Nilgiri hills, both with delightful climates. The journeys were partly by rail, partly by bullock cart, and I think, by palanquin, for, so far as my memory serves, I can recall the swaying of the palanquin and the rhythmic grunting of the bearers throughout the night. My brother and I were in a state of suppressed panic passing through the jungle at the foot of the hills, for the servants had filled our minds with stories of tigers. We never saw one.

At Ootacamund I had my first close experience with death. My mother had a little Pekinese dog called Chinchin, of which she was very fond. The butcher—a Moslem of course—had a big bull-terrier lurcher. Naturally—I suppose—he fell on Chinchin, and killed him. Next morning I was shocked to find the lurcher hanging quite dead on a rope which passed through a huge gash in his throat, from which blood was dripping. This was his owner's *amende* to the memsahib, more shocking to all of us than the original crime. For a long time I could not forget the gory sight.

Our parents now and again took us two boys to Madras and Pondicherry. I think we must have gone most of the way by road because the railway to Cuddalore was not then completed.

The great attraction of Pondicherry was that it was French. There was, also, a thrilling system of transport by what we called a “push-push”, probably

from the French "*pousse-pousse*". This was a glorified two-wheeled perambulator shoved from behind instead of being pulled as a rickshaw.

On one visit, especially memorable, all four of us, Papa, Mama and two sons, were entertained by H.E. the Governor. The occasion was marred by a dreadful lapse of manners on the part of my brother and self. For lunch there was curry. It was hot; and, though we knew better, we put into it the crushed ice handed round for the drinks. *Tableau*. I suspect our names were at once removed from the Government House List.

So much for trivial childish recollections of life in India in the seventies of last century. I have said nothing of snakes, bandicoots, rats, birds and butterflies, insects and all the plagues which worried our elders. Excepting the tired specimens carried round by the occasional itinerant snake charmers I never saw a cobra. Bandicoots are an outsize in rats, have very long noses and corresponding jaws, with an extremely nasty bite. I saw one from very close. One morning there was a hue and cry in the garden. The gardeners, armed with sticks, were chasing a bandicoot. With the tactical instinct of five years I saw that the brute would probably come down a water channel pipe, six inches underground, in my direction. With all the valour of ignorance I stooped down at the end of the pipe, with outstretched hands. It did come down the pipe, but luckily took me in its stride and jumped clear over my head.

The only scorpions we ever saw were an occasional very large specimen dangling at the end of a string, brought up by one of the gardeners as a trophy. Distance of time may lead to exaggeration, but they seemed

to be some five inches long and sizzled in the sunlight. I never saw a scorpion in the house.

To return to our homeward journey *via* Bombay. The morning after saying farewell to Brumyah our train reached the top of the Bore *ghat*, where the descent from the Deccan table-land to the coast begins. We were intensely interested in railway engines, and here noticed a type quite new to us. It was heavier and more squat than any we had seen, and had a short funnel of a strange pattern, without any copper rim at the top. We christened this at once a "Bombay funnel"; and for years afterwards in England similar funnels were known to us by that name. It was a long and steep slope down to sea-level, and at intervals there were such novel and exciting things as reversing stations and catch sidings—of which we knew nothing—to prevent runaways—all very absorbing. These things meant more to us at the moment than the big change imminent in our lives.

In Bombay, we stayed for three or four days at the Great Western Hotel, an old-fashioned hostel—in the Fort—owned, I think, by Parsees. It was the first time we had met gas, and we caused some consternation—until severely checked—by blowing out the jets in the corridors without turning off the gas—of whose nature we were ignorant. By good luck no explosion was caused. To my brother and myself the attractive feature of this hotel was a fountain in the centre of the courtyard. Round it was a nice moist area, in which we paddled. Bombay was sultry and it was soothing to feel the cool mud squishing between one's toes. But this met with no more approval than did the blowing out of the gas. Yes ! Bombay, novel and exciting though it was, was obviously full of stupid *tabus*.

We sailed in the old three-masted square-rigged P. & O. steamer *Australia* of just over 3,000 tons. So far as I remember, we had no rough weather. What most interested us was the food provided in the children's saloon, which was not to our liking, usually consisting of "pishpash", a stew with boiled rice, which we called "dog's dinner". The frequency of hot marmalade tartlets and buns, so crammed with caraway seeds that there was little bun, gave me a permanent distaste for both those things. Shortly before we reached Southampton, Hugh, my baby brother, died. He was buried ashore.

At Southampton we were joined by my eldest brother Bertie, due shortly to go to Haileybury, where my father had been. We stopped a few days at the L.S.W.R. Hotel. This had the great advantage in our eyes of enabling us to overlook the docks and ships and the shunting operations across the main road between the railway station and the docks. Frank could read better than I and spelt out the name of the shunting engine, "Canute". But neither of us had any idea of what the word meant.

That summer, after short stays on the South Devon coast, where I first tasted English mutton (instead of goat), and clotted cream, my parents settled in London, in Randolph Crescent, Maida Vale, where at that time there were many squares and open spaces. We lived there from 1875 to 1883. Two sisters and a younger brother were born there.

The chief features of life were concerned with the activities in the large square behind our house where we and the other children played in the summer evenings. James Payne, the famous Victorian novelist, lived, with a large family of daughters, on the other

side of the square. He was very kind to us boys. Before I went to school I used to go to bed at 9 o'clock, on the third floor of the house facing the Crescent, and lie awake in the long summer evenings. Randolph Crescent was a quiet neighbourhood; but one heard at rare intervals the cheerful klip-klop of hooves and the jingle of the bells of a passing hansom. Another sound was the melodious cry of "brandy-balls"—a species of bull's eye—from the peripatetic hawker in his white dressing gown patrolling the Crescent.

In 1878 my somewhat kaleidoscopic educational career began. First we had two governesses who, I am afraid, had a thin time with my brother and myself. Next followed a tutor. Frank then started his schooling by going to the London University College School, then in Gower Street. It has long since migrated to Frognal in north-west London. In our time it occupied one wing of the University building. It was a school of several hundred boys from all over London and was very "mixed". So far as I remember, there were no boarders, and every morning at 9 o'clock hordes of boys, satchel on back, disgorged by the Gower Street station of the Metropolitan Railway or by two-horsed "knife-board" omnibuses, swarmed into the gate of the gravel playground.

It was a good school, though not to be compared for prestige and amenities with the old public schools, such as Eton, Harrow, Winchester, with their long traditions and historic buildings. Two of my contemporaries, senior to me, who later became famous, were Rufus Isaacs—the late Marquis of Reading—and Hayden Coffin, the singer.

My father, who took a keen interest in education, once made the journey to Gower Street when my

brother was at school. He found himself in a carriage crowded with boys, with one of whom he got into conversation. On discovering that the youth was on his way to the U.C.S., he asked if he knew my brother. "Oh, yes, sir," was the reply—probably untrue—"excuse me, sir, but I am afraid your son is a very idle boy." This gratuitous information much amused my father, but, to my brother's disgust, he had neglected to ask the name of this busybody, who escaped the proper reward for his officiousness.

The headmaster of the U.C.S. at that time was Mr. H. W. Eve, an outstanding character. He was more than a teacher. He was a man, and a wise and kindly leader. The late General Sir Ian Hamilton was under him at Wellington, and has paid a sincere tribute to him in his autobiography.

I followed my brother to the U.C.S. just before he left for a place of the very opposite type—a dame school—kept by two spinster sisters, near Portman Square. I am not quite sure, but on its prospectus, I think, it was described as a "preparatory school for the sons of gentlemen".

A year later I followed him again, and remained for twelve months, incidentally learning more than I did in an equal period at any other establishment. At first, after the U.C.S. with its seven hundred boys, I felt it a sad come-down to be at a seminary of about sixty sons of gentlemen run entirely by females. The sisters were "blue stockings", classical scholars, and at the same time martinets, staunch upholders of discipline and good manners. They prepared pupils for the public schools of that day. The teaching staff were women. The only man about the place was an ex-drill sergeant, who daily used to conduct us sixty odd

boys, not in step, in a crocodile across Oxford Street by the Marble Arch into Hyde Park for an hour's walk. I noticed that he always smelt of cloves. It was not till much later that I learned their efficacy in concealing the reek of tobacco. He also was a good disciplinarian, though he did not inspire the same terror as the two spinsters.

My début in class—a geography lesson—was rather melodramatic. A boy named “Bertie”—we were all called by our Christian names—asked me my name in what I regarded as an offensive tone. I can't swear to it, but I believe he wore a velvet suit. To this school paladin I replied even more rudely. In two minutes, when the mistress appeared, she found the map of the world on the floor, the head of the star boy of the school sticking up through the Pacific Ocean, and the new boy sitting on it. I do not relate this as an example of my prowess; but I was fairly muscular and had come from a rougher establishment, where there were not many little Lord Fauntleroys. To be patronized by a bumptious “dame school-kid” of my own size was more than flesh and blood could stand. The fracas blew over. But Master Bertie no longer ruled the roost.

One complication of the new scholastic establishment was that the pronunciation of Latin was quite different from that of the U.C.S.

After a year, by which time my brother had departed to a boarding-school in Staffordshire, I passed into Rugby, where I was all along handicapped by my ignorance of Greek, which was a compulsory subject. At the time the headmaster was Dr. Jex Blake, who had School House. His influence was not noticeable, at all events on the small boys of other houses, and we

knew him only by sight. He had a large family and was reputed to have lost the sight of one eye, put out by a falling rocket-stick. As the school doggerel ran: "One eye, one lung, ten daughters and one son." My housemaster was a parson, mathematician, and a kindly man. The fagging system was in full force. All the new boys below a certain level had to fag. In my house the system was not abused, and there was, so far as I knew, no bullying, though the fags had to carry out some semi-menial duties, and punishment was inflicted for neglect in their performance. For instance, the youth for whom I fagged, the late General Sir George Forestier-Walker, was a member of the School Volunteers—"Dog Shooters", as they were called—and when he found me using his bayonet as a toasting fork I was duly and rightly castigated.

The smell of apples ripe and apples rotten bridges over the years and even now takes me back to the narrow passage round the quadrangle from which the studies opened, and we all had studies. It reeked of apples from autumn term to autumn term, for on their return to school every boy whose home was in the country brought with him one or two hampers, and the aroma of decaying fruit clung to the walls for the whole year.

I was proud to be a Rugbeian. I had read my *Tom Brown's Schooldays* years earlier, Scudder East being my favourite character. On entering Big School on my first morning, therefore, I was thrilled to see painted in block capitals on some loose beams the name of "East". It came as a shock when, looking across the room, I read the word "West" on some similar scaffolding.

Like so many others of our old public schools, Rugby was originally a day school, founded in the year 1567 by one Lawrence Sheriff, a local citizen, to provide an education for the boys of the town. But, as in other cases, the improved facilities for travel provided by the growth of the railways, the increasing demand for the type of education offered by a public school and the reputation of Dr. Arnold, caused parents in all parts of England to send their sons to Rugby and other boarding-schools. This called for boarding-houses, which were built to meet the demand, and were run by housemasters, considerably to their own profit. In later years I was told that my housemaster—in Holy Orders—left over £70,000. As the years passed the day boys were swamped in numbers and importance, and with the snobbish cliquishness of boys they were looked down upon and called “town louts”.

It was my third school and my first boarding-school. Though homesick at first, I was very happy there, and I was greatly distressed when, after my third term, my father broke it to me that for financial reasons he was taking me away. Rugby was not a cheap school, though not the most expensive. If in the normal course of events I had stayed there, I do not think I should have gone into the army. My father's father and five of his brothers had been soldiers ; his eldest son was a soldier, and he did not contemplate a military career for me. Moreover, Rugby was then distinctly a-military. There was no such thing as Modern Side or Army Class; and the whole bias of the place for those boys who had to make their way in the world was towards the Universities. I have no notion how my career would have shaped had I stayed on till my schooling was over. I had no University traditions nor

inclination towards an academic career. However, such speculations as to my fate had I stayed at Rugby are vain.

The problem of my future was not immediately pressing. And my father, still living in London and not knowing where else to place me, sent me back to the University College School. And so, after a comparatively spacious and privileged life at Rugby, with its Close and immemorial elms—now alas, down—the cawing of rooks and click of bat and ball, I again found myself every morning in a third-class compartment of the murky Metropolitan *en route* for Gower Street. Gone for ever were the fagging, the stodges and the sausages cooked on the gas jet, and also my struggles to acquire the language of Homer. And I was back again to the old pronunciation of Latin !

To continue for a space about my first love. Rugby, of course, had its own slang, which betrays one old boy to another. Of this I had an example years later when descending the river Brahmaputra from Assam. At breakfast on the steamer I heard another passenger speaking of the food as “stodge”. This at once served as an introduction to a pleasant journey.

The school had its unwritten laws and *tabus*. New boys were not supposed to do many quite normal things ; but it took some time to discover what was “not done”. Very early in my school career I casually crossed the School House (not my house) quad. I had been out for a walk, and was wearing a dog rose in my buttonhole, my straw hat was on one side, my trousers were turned up, and I had my hands in my pockets. I was also whistling. In all innocence I was breaking every unwritten law, when I met a prefect. He was a good-natured youth, and beyond quietly enumerating all my crimes, took no other action, but passed on

his way. The simultaneous impact of all these heinous offences was too much.

Physical strength and prowess in games was a fetish, and was the Open Sesame to many privileges. One of our heroes was a master called Hodges. He was reputed to have a fifty-inch chest and to have won his blue at Oxford for putting the shot or throwing the hammer a fabulous distance. I don't suppose he ever knew to what his influence was due. One step in promotion in the football world was to be awarded one's " bags ". This permitted the recipient to wear his socks outside his trousers—a curious but valued privilege. The next step was " Colours ". One could then appear resplendent in a velvet cap with golden House crest and tassel, the colour of the velvet differing for each house. For mine it was a very pretty blue; but I never attained even my " bags " in my brief stay at the school.

A singular habit peculiar to Rugby was a sort of fight with the feet instead of with fists. My first experience of a " down " was with a boy in the School House who stamped on a bad toe I had and called me by my nickname, sacred to my own House. This was too much. I dropped my books, seized him by the shoulder and hacked him for all I was worth. First blood counted a lot in this brutal contest and he limped off. I have a dent in my skin to this day. It was a dangerous, dirty method of fighting, but it left us without black eyes or bloody noses.

The so-called " Big Side " game of football was a curious survival and not confined to fifteen players on each side. It was a mob, and the half-backs used to walk round the scrum kicking the posteriors of all the small boys that were visible, to teach them to shove.

It certainly made us bury ourselves well in the centre of the heaving mass and not try to skulk on the edge. We fags rarely saw the ball, and did not care where it was. We burrowed and burrowed, intent on saving our sterns. It was distinctly a "worm's eye view" of the game that we had.

Occasional feasts were given in their studies by wealthy boys who were entitled to fags. The latter cleared away, and as a perquisite were entitled to the remains of the banquet; no small reward when the menu included, as it sometimes did, such courses as game and trifle. The meal was sent up by one or other of the stodge shops—pastry-cooks. When we fags got it the hot food was not always so hot. But we were not sybarites, and had boys' healthy appetites. Even the tepid leg of a bird had its interest. Cooking on a minor scale went on in the studies—as in the days of Tom Brown. Never have I eaten sausages as good as those toasted on the end of a pencil, over a blue and whistling gas jet. We were a happy house, and one of the standbys of the smaller boys was the Matron, Mrs. Broadhurst, of massive presence and motherly heart. She took great care of us when we were ill. The last time I saw the school collectively was at the Rugby and Marlborough match at Lords in 1882. The school eleven were wearing their famous light blue shirts. But we were handsomely beaten. *Vive la Compagnie!*

Not having any other educational establishment in his mind, my father, as I have said, placed me once more at the University College School. There I again found myself under the fostering care of my old "consulting master", who corresponded partly to a tutor at Oxford or Cambridge and partly to the senior sub-

altern of a regiment. He was a pedantically meticulous Latin scholar. As to his Greek I cannot speak. He was always immaculately neat in his dress. He was a tartar but a just one. He won no affection and did not want it. Accurate Latinity and no false quantities were all he required. By this time I was not slow at sizing up my pedagogues. And I did not attempt to scamp my work for old Hawkes. It did not pay !

However, change was again in the air. A cousin who was at Cheltenham College had stayed at my father's house and put it into his mind to send me to Cheltenham, which was not so expensive as Rugby. My father thereupon sounded me as to my views. I had no objection to going to Cheltenham, and soon I found myself sitting for the entrance examination. All I remember about it is that the invigilator at the examination was an unpleasant looking parson with a tow-like beard. I did not then know his name. When I had finished one paper I spent my time in doodling, which included a caricature of the bearded invigilator. Unfortunately he spotted what I was doing and insisted on seeing my paper. He was not amused. However, his annoyance did not have any grave result for me: I passed into the college. I later discovered that any venom I had put into my sketch was justified. Its subject was, next to the "Head", the most unpopular master in the college.

So, for the second time, I packed my books in my satchel and bade a final farewell to the U.C.S. I was not unhappy—but it was not Rugby !

I started my first term at Cheltenham, where the boys wore mortarboards with terrible magenta tassels, in a house called Leconfield. The different boarding houses had names, whereas at Rugby they were known

by the name of the masters who kept them. There were other more important differences between the schools. At Cheltenham the younger boys did not have studies, but had desks in the house common-room. I shared one with a youth who was to become the most prominent of my contemporaries—Arthur Lee, later Lord Lee of Fareham. He was a youth of strong character and determination and concentrated on his future career. He passed into Woolwich six months ahead of me and got his commission in the Artillery. He first distinguished himself, so the story went, by working as a Chinese coolie on the defences of Port Arthur and thereby getting valuable information. I have never fathomed how he did this, as there was little of the Chinese in his appearance. During the Spanish-American War he made a trip from the Royal Military College, Kingston, to Cuba, and became great friends with Theodore Roosevelt. Later he served as Military Attaché in Washington. He then went into Parliament and started a political career and became a member of the Cabinet. He presented the nation with "Chequers".

I missed my study at Rugby, which though small and fusty had been a sort of home. The boys were much of the same type as those at Rugby, except that there were fewer rich youths and more sons or scions of Army families.

I did not distinguish myself at cricket any more than I had done at Rugby, where I had been an absolute rabbit. I had the disadvantage of not having been at a preparatory school, where the game could be started at an early age. The result was that I loathed it.

Being a new boy had lost its terrors for me. I had become hardened and extracted some cynical amuse-



The author's grandfather, Colonel William Swinton, when
a midshipman

Painted by Sir Henry Raeburn, R.A., shortly before 1800

ment from the position. I soon discovered a specimen of the unpleasant type of youth who is very friendly with lonely new boys so long as their pocket-money lasts, and in confidence worms intimate family secrets out of them, which he retails to other boys, to the confusion of the innocent newcomer. I suspected him, and bought him ices so long as I could afford to do so. I also supplied him with some confidential and scandalous and entirely bogus "facts" about my family. When this fictitious information came round to me—there was no doubt as to its source and I had a very satisfactory settlement with my false friend, which repaid me for all the pocket-money I had expended on him.

I was at Cheltenham only one term. During that summer my family left London for Blackheath, hard by Woolwich, and when I got home for the holidays my father took me aside and said that he did not want to break my heart a second time, but if I were not really very much attached to Cheltenham there was a very good local day school called the Blackheath Proprietary School, which had been established for some years and had a high reputation, and that it would save his pocket considerably if I were to go there. I at once agreed, not that I did not like Cheltenham, but Rugby was my first love, and I did not much care where I went.

Thus, once more I became a day-boy—a town lout, in fact, and walked a mile four times a day across Blackheath to the B.P.S. It was a much smaller school than any of the others I had so far attended except the dame school. The "Prop" was a great football stronghold, and had been prominent in the Rugger world in earlier days. I believe that the famous Black-

heath Club was originally started by some of its old boys. I soon received my colours in the second, and then in the first, fifteen. On leaving, a good many boys went up to the Universities, but the greater number were sons of business men and followed in their fathers' footsteps. I was there for two and a half years, from the summer of 1883 till Christmas 1885, and made many friends. One master made a lasting impression on me. He was the German master, Herr Osiander—known as “Osy”. In spite of being a martinet he was extremely popular and a remarkably good teacher in a way which made all his pupils want to learn more. I owed him a great deal, in that I never tried to shirk my work for him.

I spent the summer holidays of 1884 with a German family named Sadée at Koenigstrasse 23, Bonn-am-Rhein, where my brother joined me later. We had a very happy time. Herr Sadée was employed in some local cement works. He had two sons. Hermann, the elder, was in the army, doing his one year's service as an *Einjähriger* volunteer at Düsseldorf. The younger, Emil, was at the University and a great classical scholar. A very serious youth, he amused us by always wearing a frockcoat tightly buttoned and a black felt parson's hat.

The daughter, some years older, gave me a German lesson every morning. She was a terribly earnest, austere and hardboiled spinster, and insisted that my father should have his money's worth in her tuition of me. The whole family was most honest and conscientious, and with them I learned a lot of German. The country round Bonn, especially on the Rhein, was most picturesque. The Drachenfels was close by on the other side of the river, and there were lovely

spots for sketches and walks all round. Every two miles or so there was a pub selling very good beer at one penny a bottle ! Amongst other places I sketched was Godesberg, now celebrated. One other English boy joined us. He was a Marlburian, and would not make any effort to speak German. He was a fool. We three English boys used to have desperate battles with windfalls under the roadside apple trees. Our opponents were Emil and a Belgian youth, Alphonse Grisar. These two threw like girls, and hadn't a chance. In August the floating swimming baths on the Rhein were a godsend. In swimming against the strong current I acquired a powerful breast stroke, which enabled me to win races after I got home. In the midst of the heat we were challenged by some of the University students to climb the Drachenfels and play them at "Fussball". We did not accept.

My father, rather naturally, wished me to go in for his old Service—the Indian Civil—and not for the Army. But when my two cousins, then cadets at the Shop,¹ gained commissions in the Sappers, he agreed to my trying for the R.M. Academy on condition that I did the same. This was good enough for me, though it meant hard work, for it would have been my only chance to get into Woolwich before I passed the age limit.

I knew some of my academic weak points, and realized that I should need "cramming" in those subjects to have any chance of passing, for the competition was severe—about six candidates for every vacancy. My father appreciated this, and sent me to the only crammer's of which he knew, near Aldershot.

Again was I fated to be a rolling stone. The tutor's establishment was in a charming house run by two

¹ Royal Military Academy, Woolwich.

retired colonels. The accommodation was good and the food was excellent; and it was quite easy to break out of the house at night ! In fact, " everything in the garden was lovely ". However, I was not interested in lovely gardens, but determined not to miss my only chance of getting into the Engineers. Though the examination was only five months off, yet in a whole week no attempt was made to test my knowledge in any subject. There were about a dozen pupils, mostly the sons of rich parents, who did not mind how they wasted their fathers' money or when they succeeded in passing into the Army. It was an expensive " genteel " loafer's paradise. I was the sole candidate for the R.M.A. Only one other pupil had passed into Woolwich, and was still there when I joined. (He was a magnificent specimen physically and a good boxer. Commissioned in the Gunners, he was, according to rumour, obliged to leave, and joined the French Foreign Legion in Africa, where he was shot for trying to desert.) I was so convinced that I should never pass from this place that I wired my father. He relied on my judgment and terminated my stay by telegram.

Once again I was at a loose end. Luckily I knew of another very active crammer's, Messrs. James and Lynch, of Kensington. I went to see them. This establishment was a different proposition. Captain James (late R.E.) was a live wire, full of " pep ". I had not been there two hours before I had been put through my paces by himself, a dapper, brisk little man in a brown velveteen coat; and the subjects I should take were settled. Within four days I was ensconced in Kensington, hard at work for several hours each day.

The competitive examination took place during a very hot spell in June and was trying. We sat in the Westminster Town Hall, where the old steam underground trains puffed and rumbled below us every few minutes and the children of an infants' school next door sang at intervals. The demeanour of the candidates was illuminating. Some were obviously nervous. Others were hardened. One youth nonchalantly brought in a copy of *The Sporting Times*—the old “Pink ‘un”—which he proceeded to read until he was ordered to hand it over by the examiner. I passed eighth on the list.

Shortly afterwards I received official instructions from the War Office to report myself at the R.M. Academy on a certain date in October. Here, as the junior term, we were known as “snookers”. There were four classes or terms of cadets, the seniors being “corporals”, with disciplinary powers of awarding extra drills, unofficially known as “hocksters”—parades which had to be attended at an early hour, before breakfast, on a frosty morning—horrible !

There was no “go as you please” about the “Shop”. We paraded for every meal and for every study, the roll being called, after which we were marched in. At the beginning of their term of authority the corporals, being “new brooms”, were very zealous in their duties. The discipline was rigorous. No excuse was taken for unpunctuality, unbrushed boots or uniform, or unshaven chins. We wore blue, padded tunics which showed every speck of dust, and through which the padding penetrated. None of your dirt-concealing khaki or Service dress. But the relays of youths from different schools were made to realize what strict discipline was, and got a

fresh conception of the meaning of smartness and sloppiness.

It was remarkable to see the change brought about in the attitude of some of those who had been good at games at school and therefore "bloods". Their "bloodiness" slipped from them when they became gentlemen cadets, Fourth Class. They were, in this new world, once again just "mud". In my opinion the discipline was salutary. I benefited from it myself, and saw its lasting effects on others who passed through the same mill.

We did not receive our uniforms for about a month, but attended parade in top hats. I remember that, as a snooker, I had to sit at one end of a table of nine at meals, and carve and help. My top hat was on the floor under the end of the table. Without my noticing it some wag filled it with beer. However, I was not going to throw away a perfectly good hat for such a trifling, and I wore it on all parades, much to the surprise of my neighbours, who could not imagine why a cloud of flies always collected above my head in the hot October sun.

I am not going even to summarize the events of the three terms I had at the Shop. The normal period of one's stay there was two years, or four terms. But in 1887 there was a Russian scare, so our course was telescoped to three terms, and my term was commissioned with the senior class.

The competition for sappers was severe. The choice of being commissioned in the R.E. was offered from the top of a term down the list. To our term of sixty cadets fifteen sapper commissions were offered. I passed out fourth, being gazetted as a Second Lieutenant in the

Royal Engineers, on the 17th February, 1888, with orders to report at Chatham.

During the interval I paid a short visit, on leave, to Malta, where I found many friends. In March I joined the School of Military Engineering at Chatham. My military career had started.

The next year and a half was one of my happiest periods. I was an officer, with the freedom that implies, which meant a great deal. At Chatham I had everything: I was receiving pay, supplemented by a small allowance from my father. We could enjoy all the ordinary games, as well as sailing in our own yachts and rowing on the Medway. We had a very fine Mess. For those who had horses there was hunting close by. The duties for young officers were varied between military training and technical and engineering instruction, a large part of it out of doors and away from Chatham, interspersed with tours abroad. It must be remembered that the Sappers were fully trained as Infantry, as well as in their specialist work as R.E.s. The life was full, interesting and altogether ideal for a young man. Happy salad days !

In February, 1890, our two years' course of instruction reached its end, and the time came for us to be "posted" to fill vacancies at any station in the Empire—it was still "the Empire". Of these, India then offered definite attractions. The tour of service was for a minimum of five years, with the option of reverting Home, or of staying permanently on the Indian Establishment until retirement, with longer periods of leave and better retired pay. India was a country where a young officer could live on his pay and have a very pleasant time in the way of sport, with a good chance of seeing active service, as there was almost always some small war on the frontier.

I had personal reasons also for wishing to go there; I had happy recollections of the country. I liked what I had known of the people as a child; one of my uncles was still soldiering there, as was my eldest brother. I came from an Anglo-Indian Service family, many members of which had spent their lives in India and had died there. I distinctly felt the call of the "shiny East", and was curious to discover the changes which had taken place since 1874. My father, who had served in India from 1849 to 1874, was only too pleased that I should follow in his footsteps and those of his own father and other dead and gone forbears, and make my career in the same country. There was much competition for it, and not all who applied to go out succeeded in doing so.

And so, in February, 1890, in top hat and tail-coat, a roll of samples of my work under my arm, I duly repaired, in a hansom cab, to the War Office,

then in Pall Mall, for a personal interview with the Deputy Adjutant-General, Royal Engineers. It promised to be an ordeal, for much depended on the result. But, like so many similar official interviews, it was more terrible in anticipation than in realization. I was one of the lucky ones. My interview was favourable; and I was told that I should receive my embarkation orders in due course. Two batches of young officers were being sent out before the end of the trooping season.

I shall never forget the day I was selected. There was the journey to London, the suspense before the meeting, which was to settle one's immediate future, possibly the whole of one's career, and the ensuing reaction. After lunch, while waiting to return to Chatham, another officer and I passed the time by visiting the Westminster Aquarium, a by-gone popular resort on the site where now stands the Central Hall, of quite a different character. In the language of the day the Aquarium was considered rather "fast," and was *tabu* to unescorted young ladies. The great attraction at the moment was the firing from a monster gun of a lovely lady in tights, who was caught in a net stretched over the audience. Those of my readers who knew London and its amusements at that period will recall the name of Zazel.

In March I embarked at Portsmouth on H.M.S. *Euphrates*, one of the old troopships, tied up alongside the quay from which so many thousands of soldiers have sailed. The departure, with the cheering, the band playing *The Girl I Left Behind Me* and *Auld Lang Syne*, needs no description.

The *Euphrates* was one of four or five specially constructed transports. She was a three-masted vessel

riding high out of the water and, like all the troopers of that time, was painted white. Her bows were ram-shaped like a battleship—which did not make for speed. She was very crowded. There were nearly twenty R.E. second lieutenants on board, apart from those of other arms.

Naturally, being of such junior rank, we were, in naval parlance, “dogs’ bodies”. In the troopers of those days comfort was not considered. We were four to a cabin, on an unholly lower deck below the water line, called “Pandemonium”, in which one never saw daylight through the porthole except when the ship rolled especially violently. And she did roll, like a porpoise. Those for whom there were no cabins were allotted hammocks slung about four feet above the deck in the gangway. To reach a cabin one had to crawl under these hammocks. Up on deck, in the waist of the ship, there were a few officers’ baths with running salt water, outside which we queued in dressing-gowns or mackintoshes, carrying sponges, literally cheek by jowl with the carcases hanging outside the butcher’s shop.

In addition to the naval officer of the watch, there was a military orderly officer every day. Part of his tour of duty at night was going round the troop decks, where the men slept on the deck and in hammocks some four feet above it. The naval petty officer of the watch, with a lantern, and on sea-legs, led a procession of the orderly officer (military), followed by the orderly corporal (also military), who climbed and dived over and under the recumbent figures. It was always hot and in rough weather the stench was appalling. It was bad enough to pay a short visit to the troop decks. To stay down there every night and all night must have

been hell. I pitied the rank and file, but men were tough in those days. They did not "walk off" a ship.

We did not like the ship's officers, many of whom were superior in manner and patronising to us "leather-necks" of the Junior Service. We naturally tried to get our own back by talking loudly of the sharp and blunt ends of the vessel and of going up and down stairs. It was all very childish, but natural in the circumstances. And it achieved its purpose in annoying the sailors. We were told, and believed, that the officers employed on the trooping service were not the pick of the Navy.

Among so large a number of members of the "Scientific Corps", proverbially "mad, married or Methodist", we had some peculiar characters. One Sapper subaltern, a clever man, and a keen yachtsman, was at the same time a most almighty prig. He was orderly officer on the day we reached Malta after a dirty night, and some of us persuaded him that the navigating officer on the bridge would appreciate some advice on how to enter Valetta Harbour. We did not hear what actually passed, but the language used by the sailor was so nautical that our hero pretended not to understand it. This did not improve relations between the two Services.

In Malta all of us Gunner and Sapper subalterns dined at the combined R.A. and R.E. Mess in the palatial *Auberge de Castille*, where, after dinner, we took the customary toboggan slide on a heavy tea-tray down the long flight of stone stairs, with much detriment to our uniform. Next morning we sailed, chewing nougat and redolent of oranges and marsala, which were very cheap and good. Port Said followed, with

its "Turkish Delight" and other delights of a less reputable nature. Not for nothing was this place described as the "vent of three Continents". In the Red Sea conditions became more bearable because many of us slept on deck.

After passing Perim, we reached sweltering Aden, with its divers, ostrich eggs in baskets, and its emaciated cats led by their owners at the ends of strings which had a knot to show where string ended and cat began. I had seen all this before, but with the non-discriminating, though observant eyes of a child. In the Indian Ocean we had two subalterns' courts-martial, at one of which the prisoner was charged with the military crime of cutting off his moustache. I was witness for the defence, and for the occasion donned an expensive suit of so-called khaki provided by my outfitter at home. It was of a shade I never saw in India, but I was very proud of it until I was described by the prosecutor—the ship's adjutant—as the "liar in the brown paper suit". The Indian Ocean was kind, and hours before reaching Bombay we could smell the distinctive and unforgettably pungent odour of the Indian bazaar.

Once in port, the ship was beset by a crowd of hopeful would-be servants for the incoming officers. Almost all carried a bundle of dog-eared chits (characters) from former employers. In some cases they could not possibly have understood the real meaning of the contents. I had been warned not to engage any servants in Bombay, which was full of scoundrels looking for innocent newcomers, but to wait until I got to my final destination.

On reporting my arrival, I learned that this was to be Lucknow, a rail journey of two nights and one day.

The next thing was to find out if the Great Western Hotel, my caravanserai of sixteen years previously, still existed. It did, and I put up there. It was much the same as I remembered. There was still the fountain in the courtyard and the mud. But what brought Bombay back to me most strongly was the perpetual cawing of the crows overhead and the all-pervading shrilling of the scavenger kites higher up in the cloudless blue sky. Yes, this was Bombay all right.

Bombay, I believe, now has a ring of lofty blocks of flats all round the Bay from Colaba to Malabar Hill. In 1890 the biggest building was Watson's Hotel, afterwards the Taj Mahal. Even to a Londoner the crowded streets were a surprise, as were the colours of the people's clothes, and the mixture of animals in the traffic.

To my delight I found at the hotel two Gunner subalterns of my term at the Shop, who were on leave from somewhere up-country. They had been out some two years and as we sat in deck chairs with long wooden arms upon which to rest our legs and drinks, I listened and learned a lot about India from the subaltern's point of view.

On the second night I drove with three others off the *Euphrates* to the palatial Victoria terminus, and boarded the night mail of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway—name of romance which thrilled me—*en route* for Lucknow. A kind lady on board ship had been a mother to us youngsters and given us much good advice. She impressed on us the importance of avoiding a chill, especially on the stomach, on our journey up-country, and advised us to buy at the station a *razai*, or cotton-stuffed quilt, because after crossing the sweaty coastal flats the train would climb the Ghats, and the temperature would drop suddenly. We did as we

were bid. But we were not warned that the dye of the quilts was not fast: and when we awoke in the morning it was to find our faces and pyjamas a patchwork of rainbow colours. As prudent travellers, we also bought a huge bunch of plantains (bananas) and a block of ice, which we placed in the lavatory basin. Long before daylight the ice had melted and the fruit gone black as soot. We were being "larned".

It was an instructive and curious journey. We shared a saloon carriage fitted with four bunks and a bathroom and shower. After a restless night we found ourselves running across a corner of Central India, swept by scorching hot winds. For breakfast, at a station, we had curry, which, I was to discover, was the *plat du jour* at every railway station refreshment room in India: and I ordered what I thought was the only and traditional drink of a sahib—brandy and soda. Then, instead of closing the smoked glass windows and screens of fragrant wetted grass which were designed to keep out the dust and glare and hot winds, we opened everything wide and sat in our pyjamas, with feet hanging out of the doorways. As it was April, at the beginning of the hot weather, in the furnace temperature of Central India, we all got headaches. The two of us due for Lucknow reached there in the sizzling heat of noon the next day and were met by friends in their bamboo dogcarts, called for some reason "tumtums". We were taken out of the glare into the darkened and comparatively cool atmosphere of a bungalow, with its *punkahs*. There were then no such luxuries as mechanical or electrically driven *punkahs*. All were actuated by a string passing through a hole in the wall pulled by a somnolent coolie outside.

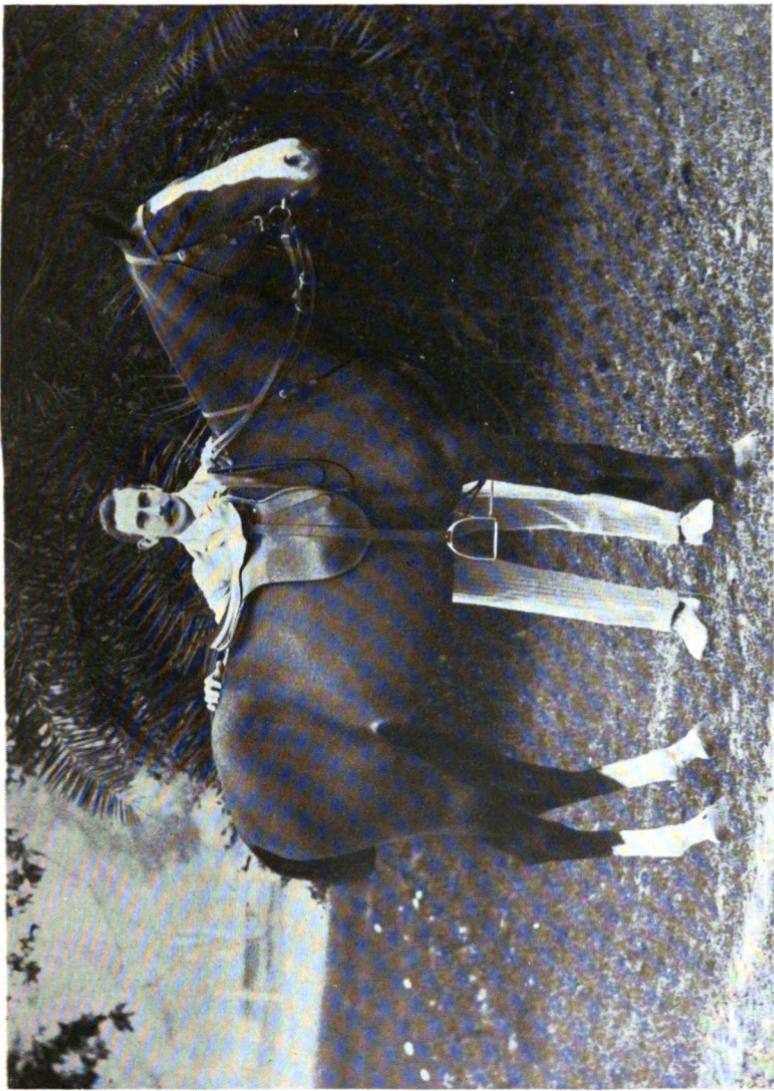
I shared with two other subalterns a thatched bungalow which we dubbed the "Pig and Whistle". It had a large compound and garden, and good stabling. The domestic staff seemed to me enormous. Each of us had his own bearer (valet) and his own *khitmatgar* (butler), one *syce* (groom) for each pony, as well as a grasscutter. Common to the establishment were a cook and assistant, a gardener and assistant, a nightwatchman and a washerman and a scavenger. Practically the whole of this enormous population lived in the compound in a row of servants' quarters. There were also two bullocks to draw water from the well, and as many dogs as we happened to possess.

As to my future, my hope was to join the Survey of India, which would mean the cold weather spent in field work in the jungle, and the hot weather under civilized conditions at some hill station, where one could enjoy the amenities of social life in a cool climate. Appointment to the Survey was made in India, and I submitted an application, and a form giving all sorts of intimate personal details. The reply was that I would be communicated with in due course; a personal interview with the Surveyor-General was indicated. But he was in Calcutta—a long way from Lucknow, and I decided to await events.

Meanwhile, I was attached to the Military Works Department, the normal employment of R.E. officers not doing regimental duty with any of the three Corps of Sappers and Miners, or otherwise specially employed. The Department was a Branch of the Public Works Department (P.W.D.) and was responsible for the construction and maintenance of all barracks, fortifications, roads and bridges required by the Army.

I was an "attached" officer, assistant to the Executive Engineer of the Lucknow Division, which included the outstations of Cawnpore, Fatehgarh, Sitapur and Fyzabad. In due course, if I were not transferred to other employ, I should be "posted" and draw more pay. It was some months before I was posted, and I carried on with my routine duties, which do not call for a detailed description, and so passed the hot weather, with occasional visits to the outstations.

In June the monsoon broke, with the usual down-pour, and lasted for days on end, when the whole baked countryside grew green overnight, and insect life came to frenzied and offensive activity. Whereas previously one had been kept awake at night by the maddening song of the brain-fever bird, once the rains started sleep was rendered difficult by the croaking of the myriads of frogs which had remained underground during the dry heat. All flying things became a pest. Clouds of white ants, like jets of steam, issued from holes in the ground and swarmed round the lamps in the bungalow. Their wings stuck to the oily surface, and under each wall lamp soon there grew up a heap of singed, squirming, wingless white bodies. There was also one particularly annoying grasshopper-like insect, whose hobby it was to settle on the table, take aim at the lamp in the centre, and project himself like a shell from a gun. When he missed the light, as he nearly always did, and hit one of the diners in the face, he had another shot. There were small green beetles or bugs which stank horridly. The walls were dotted with the little lizards which were permanent denizens. They were quite innocuous, but had the disgusting habit of shedding their wriggling tails on the slightest provocation. More noxious creatures



E. D. S. and Stockings, Lucknow, March, 1893

also began to take shelter in the bungalow. For fear of scorpions one's mess boots had to be shaken out before being put on. The thatched roof harboured all sorts of animal life, including bandicoots and rats.

The most seriously objectionable intruder was the krait, the small ringed snake which is so deadly, all the more so on account of its insignificant size—rarely over two feet in length. Lucknow was a bad place for these snakes. One always had a lighted hurricane lantern on the floor by one's bed, for it was not safe to wander about in slippers in the dark. I killed six in the bungalow during my first hot weather. On one occasion, when dressing for dinner, I spotted what I thought was a coil of cord just behind the bare heel of my bearer, who was handing me my white drill mess jacket. When I saw it begin slowly to uncoil, I fetched him a buffet which sent him reeling, and then jumped with both heels on the intruder. As I had on Wellingtons there was no danger to me in doing this. My bearer was both surprised and aggrieved, for I never assaulted my servants in any way, until he saw the body writhing on the floor. Luckily cobras were rare.

At the very beginning of the rains we had a tragedy in the next compound. The occupant of the bungalow walked across from the R.A. Mess after dinner. As it was pouring, he put up an umbrella, but had no lantern. The result was that he fell down a well in his garden some fifty feet and broke his neck. His body was found by our *bhisti* early next morning.

The cantonment Dilkusha (Heart's Delight) was some five miles from the native city of Lucknow, on the River Goomti, over which it was supposed to watch. It was a favourite station, and had a large garrison of one British cavalry and one Indian cavalry regiment,

two batteries of artillery, two battalions of British, and two of Native infantry. There were no R.E. troops (Sappers and Miners), and consequently no R.E. Officers Mess. (There were only three in the whole of India). This made little difference to us, for all units were most hospitable and we homeless Sappers were honorary members of all the regimental messes. This gave the R.E.s a wide circle of friends whom later they met in all parts of the world.

With this large garrison and a big civil station there was lots to do. There were two clubs, one—the Chutter Munzil (Golden Umbrella)—on the river not far from the city, and the Gymkhana Club, called the Mahomed Bagh, in Dilkusha. At both there were polo grounds, racquet and hard lawn tennis courts and a swimming bath. I had a hand in the construction of racquet courts and polo grounds.

My daily routine was to get up before six, to ride round any works going on, return for bath and breakfast—including mango fool—and then office, where I lunched, returning to my bungalow about 5 p.m. After that there were games of all sorts. I did not play polo at Lucknow, for though I had two, and often three, ponies, the standard of horseflesh set by the British cavalry and R.H.A. was above my means. I contented myself with racquets and rowing, at which we Sappers always acquitted ourselves well. All officers possessed *tumtums*, and except in the cold weather never walked anywhere.

The bulk of the troops had one day per week free of training and drills. This for some reason was known as a “Europe Morning” when everyone got up later than usual. The Sappers had no such luxury. For us every week-day was the same. For the garrison

there were field days during the cold weather. There was also during that season much social life, with dinners and dances, polo, racquets and tennis tournaments, badminton—in fact, “poodle faking” in all its forms. At week-ends one used to drive out some distance for duck and snipe shooting and occasionally quail; there was no big game shooting or pigsticking within easy reach. During my first cold weather I tried out the gun given me as a farewell present by my father.

I found the snipe quite as difficult to hit as they were reputed to be. I was staring with pride and an open breech at the first bird I brought down, when there was a “swish”, and a hawk which had been hovering just overhead swooped down and robbed me of my prey.

These cold-weather duck and snipe shoots are some of my most pleasant memories. The arrival at the *jheel* (sheet of water) shortly after sunrise, when the heat was just enough to cause the mist to rise off the surface in wisps of steam curling upwards: the gabbling and nervous quacking of the ducks and teal beginning to smell danger as, poled by a coolie in a small flat-bottomed coracle, one silently approached through the reeds: the first shot which sent clouds of birds wheeling in all directions, with cries in every key, perhaps to fly off to another *jheel*, perhaps to settle down once more on the same patch of clear water, were all delightful experiences.

The gradual emergence beyond the *jheel* of clumps of mango trees and palms and clusters of native huts, contributing by their fires to the general haziness, were a fitting background. And over all the pungent, though not unpleasant, smell of their cowdung fires was insistent.

Then, during the heat of the day it was exciting to trudge through the mud, almost up to one's knees, after snipe, which often rose from one's very feet with a startling squawk, but it had not the charm of the early approach to the *jheel*.¹

Horses and dogs were so much part of one's life, that I cannot refrain from a brief reference to my friends. During my five years I had four dogs. The first was a fox terrier named Ugly. The next was an old bull mastiff, Bumblepuppy, whose chief pleasure was to galumph round the bungalow at night after musk-rats or mice. Having upset all the small tables and light chairs in his wild career he would drive his prey into a corner. He was too clumsy and big jowled to kill it, but would slobber and so drown or scare it to death. My next hound was a delightful black spaniel bitch, Dinah. She was most affectionate, and later, when I was at Fatehgarh on the Ganges, she used to run down to the river early every morning, have a swim, roll on the bank, then come up to the bungalow, dripping wet and covered with sand, and jump on to my bed, to awaken "Master". She died of temper when hardly more than a pup, before I had time to break her in to the gun. My last hound was a brown spaniel bitch—Bessie.

Of ponies I had a succession. First the Hussy, a chestnut mare so nervous that she shied at her shadow. Beyond being a fast trotter her only accomplishment was smashing traps. Then there was Satan, a black stallion, and a terror. He was followed by Tommy, a sluggish roan: Dewdrop, a grey: and a white beast, Pendulum, whose name suggests his paces. The last three were all geldings. My final bit of horseflesh was a bay called Stockings, also a gelding, whose portrait

I give. I was fond of all except Satan. My head syce, or groom, was with me during my whole five years in India.

The mind of the Indian servant works in a curious way. A natural snob, caste-conscious and a hero-worshipper, he takes pleasure and pride in the status and possessions of his master of the moment. My bearer, Buldeo, once said to me, "Your Honour is a bigger man than . . . Sahib", naming a friend in the Scottish Rifles. "Your Honour has two more pairs of boots." Buldeo was a low caste Hindu, who liked to wait at table when we entertained. He was a dressy fellow and turned out very smart, in a shot silk purple waistcoat and the tail of his *puggaree* floating down his back. To big dinners it was customary for the guests to take their own table servants; and if a dish appeared to be running short there was quite likely to be an unseemly scuffle between two faithful *kitmatgars*, each zealous for the well-being of his own master. Most servants were efficient, loyal and trustworthy to their own sahibs, if they were fairly treated. Domestic service, like so many professions in India, was usually hereditary.

In September, 1890, I suffered a terrible blow. My eldest brother, a subaltern in the 44th Gurkha Light Infantry, then at Shillong, up in Assam, was killed in action whilst in command of an expedition advancing by river to the relief of Changsil, a stockade in the Lushai country. The blow was all the more severe as I was on the point of visiting him.

On the invitation of his regiment, and to settle up his affairs, I decided to go to Shillong. It was a long and sad journey, but interesting and instructive in the difficulties of maintaining traffic, during the monsoon,

on a railway system in a flat country under a mountain range such as the Himalayas. Setting out from Lucknow on a broad-gauge train I seemed, as I progressed eastwards, to descend by successive stages in the world of railway travel. I changed from a full blooded, roomy, broad-gauge carriage into one on a metre gauge line, and then, so far as I remember, into a toy railway of something like two foot gauge. The rains had only just ceased, and for miles on each side of the line, which was on an embankment, the country was under water. At one river the bridge had been washed away; but communication had not ceased, for the rails, with the sleepers still attached, hung over the gap in a curve, and across this the mails and we few passengers were tobogganed in a trolley to a waiting train on the far side. I was speculating as to whether there was to be any further "shedding" of gauge when we arrived on the bank of the mighty Brahmaputra. This was the final stop. From a temporary landing stage we boarded a river steamer and chugged slowly up against the fierce current. The scene reminded me of the Mississippi of Mark Twain.

After several hours I landed at Gauhati, the starting point of the hill road up to Shillong. Here I found many planters—a type which I had not met before. All had known my brother, and treated me with the greatest kindness and hospitality. In the *dak bungalow* (rest house), where I put up for the night, I was assailed by mosquitoes which for size and aggressiveness were only beaten by those I encountered twenty-five years later, on the shores of the Gulf of Finland. Next morning I started off by *tonga*—a very low-slung two-wheeled cart drawn by a pair of ponies—on the climb to Shillong. There was then no railway.

The road was winding and steep, running for some miles through dense bamboo jungle, where my eye was attracted by huge glistening yellow webs, which occasionally had a spider as big as a mouse at the centre. I didn't know whether they were tarantulas, and did not descend to inspect.

Shillong was a pretty little place in the thickly wooded Kasia Hills. The Kasisas are sturdy hill people, light in complexion, whose womenfolk have rosy cheeks, and a distinctly Chinese appearance.

From my brother's comrades I learned how he had died. He had been in command of a mixed force of Gurkhas and Military Police going up the river in boats to relieve Changsil stockade, then under siege. At one place where the jungle was too thick and the banks too steep for flanking parties—the Lushais had laid an ambush of an assortment of firearms—mostly gas-pipe guns loaded with potleg, which they touched off when the leading boat arrived within range. My brother had been killed by the first volley. He was buried at Changsil.

Adjutant of the battalion, he had obviously been beloved by the men. I was much touched by the manner in which the Gurkha officers expressed their respect and sympathy with me by filing before me, extending the hilts of their swords, and offering me salt. I was even more touched when a hairy great nomad Afghan horse-dealer salaamed, presented his knife and a lump of wild honeycomb as big as two Rugby footballs. In physique, race and religion he was the very antithesis of the tiny Gurkhas, but was inspired by the same sentiment. He spoke Pushtu, which I did not. It was one of those occasions when words are superfluous.

After a stay of a few days, which included a ceremony at which a sacrificial goat was decapitated at one stroke of a specially heavy *kukri* (the Gurkha knife), and a blank morning in the surrounding woods after woodcock, I set out on my return journey to India. I was interested to learn that Shillong was close to Cherrapunji, the rainiest spot on earth, and that the jungle between the two places was a favourite haunt of the hamadryad, or king-cobra, an aggressive brute running up to a length of thirteen feet. I saw some large specimens in spirits in the museum.

At Gauhati the fraternity of planters was as friendly as on my way up. The return thence downstream to Goalundo, close to Calcutta, was naturally much quicker than the journey up. The changing course of the river's main channel was extraordinary, the stream sometimes cutting off great areas and engulfing many villages. Its navigation called for very expert and up-to-the-moment pilotage. Once a vessel touched a sand-bank she was likely to be slewed round broadside to the stream and held where she was, even if she did not capsize. At one point we saw a steamer high and dry a mile or so inland, in the main channel of the previous year. There were large stretches of flat jungle covered with tall elephant grass, excellent cover for tiger and rhinoceros, which abounded.

One of my objects in returning via Calcutta was to call on the Surveyor-General of India in regard to my appointment. He explained that the officers accepted for the Survey were posted according to the date of their acceptance and not according to their military seniority, and showed me the list of those accepted, which included my name. The sequel came four years later, in 1894, when two R.E. officers were

gazetted to the Survey, one senior and one junior to me, whose names were not in the list I had seen in 1890. Both were sons of senior government officials at Simla! So I gave up any idea of the Survey, and when my five years in India were up, applied to revert Home. I was disappointed, but had already learned too much to be soured. Looking back, I feel that perhaps I was on the whole fortunate in not staying out in India.

When I got back to Military Works at Lucknow, the Superintending Engineer of the Circle, who was a "grass bachelor", invited me to share his official quarters. He was Colonel T. Oliver Wingate, one of the last of the officers of the old Indian Army to join the Military Works. He was an excellent engineer, very kind to me, and a pleasant stable-mate. He was the old type, with a long "handle-bar" moustache and a big cheroot always in his mouth. His Government quarters were not thatched: there were no kraits or bandicoots, and few muskrats. The whole building, which had been put up from materials rejected for the construction of barracks, was built of brick in cement. The roof was flat, carried on iron girders. In the language it was "*pukka*". There was a good *khansama* (cook), a large compound and garden, and ample stabling. Normally we fed at home, but there were messes and two clubs at which we could dine. I lived with Wingate for three happy years, until he retired.

My immediate chief, Major E. Glennie, R.E. was also a good friend. He was a diffident and shy man, such as always attracts the attention of bullies. Afraid of horses, for long he would never drive with me. By bad luck the first time he did so risk his life it was behind the Hussy. As we turned through the gates of the

"Pig and Whistle" she shied badly at nothing. The offside step of the trap cut one of the pillars of the gateway in half, and was sheared right off. The Major and I and my *syce* were thrown out undamaged. The Hussy tried to bolt, but I had hung on to the reins. Not unnaturally it was the last time Glennie entrusted himself behind any pony of mine.

The General Officer commanding the District, General Aeneas Perkins, was a well known character, a Sapper who had spent most of his time in building railways on the N.W. frontier. He was a fine figure of a man, tall and broad, with a heavy moustache of which he was very proud. He was also extremely peppery—as generals often are in their own commands—and was reputed to be addicted to slinging the ink-stand at his A.A.G., a very meek colonel. Naturally he bullied Glennie. One of his pet schemes was to have a block of quarters built for the bachelor officers of the station and so relieve them from being at the mercy of the owners of thatched and rat-infested bungalows. It was a good idea, and Glennie was ordered to prepare a preliminary plan and rough estimate for such a block. He did so, and we subalterns helped to design a perfect palace. When he produced it the G.O.C. was in a bad mood, and flung it back, "This is not good enough for *my* officers. Get out a better design next week." We were indignant at the browbeating of our immediate chief. "*We'll* show him," we said, and persuaded the Major to allow us to make out the fresh design. We prepared one for an absurdly elaborate building, with every sort of pansy accommodation, such as a music room, a board room, billiard room, relaxation room. Knowing our General, we laid a trap for him. Every room

was labelled in block capitals except one small apartment near the entrance, which had only the letter "G". We guessed that the fractious old man would at once pitch on the unnamed room: "Why is this not labelled? What the devil does "G" stand for?" The answer was, "Guide for the officers". We doubted whether the Major would dare to play his part, and we coached and gingered him up. As he told us afterwards, everything went according to plan. The General "bought" it, and when he got the pre-arranged answer he flung the paper back with a roar of laughter. We heard no more of the super quarters for officers. Encouraged by the success of his *audace*, when ordered to produce a scheme to keep the flies out of the Sudder bazaar—the soldiers' bazaar within the cantonments—which was large, Glennie asked for an allotment of thousands of rupees for wire meat-safe gauze sufficient to enclose the whole area. The project was dropped.

In the beginning of the hot weather of 1901 I was temporarily transferred for some special work at Fatehgarh on the Ganges, some seventy miles north of Cawnpore. It was the station of a detachment of the Scottish Rifles posted there as a guard for the gun-carriage factory, which was in an old fort on the river. There were then few carriage factories in India, and Fatehgarh would, in the event of trouble, have been a key point. Not far off was the large native city of Farukhabad, a turbulent place which in case of an *émeute*, as it was often called officially, was likely to become a focus of trouble. The Ganges ate away its banks every rainy season and was now threatening the fort at Fatehgarh which was protected by groynes. My job was to improve the protection.

The chief points of the fort which remain in my memory are the height and thickness of the earth parapets inside its perimeter, and the immense size of the venerable mango trees inhabited by colonies of monkeys. The monkeys were a perpetual nuisance, but were not disturbed for fear of hurting Hindu susceptibilities. Inside the fort was the continuous drone of circular saws and lathes and the metallic clang of the hammers in the metal workers' shops. Pervading the whole stagnant air was the aromatic smell of the saw-dust of the *sal* logs. Towards midday the soporific effect of this combination of heat and smell became overpowering. That anyone kept awake was remarkable. The officer in charge of this drowsy hive of industry was a major in the Indian Ordnance Department, a bromidic person whom we called the "water buffalo"—an apt name.

My work was straightforward and interesting, and also afforded some minor excitement. I usually took down to the pile-driver on the river bank my .450 Winchester repeating rifle, in order to have a shot at the long-nosed fish-eating alligators (*garials*), whose nostrils and bony eye-protuberances often showed above water. If only wounded these ugly brutes at once sank to the bottom. I hit a good many, but so far as I know, never killed one. For my light rifle the eye was the only vulnerable spot, and it was a small target. It was delightful to be able to combine sport and work in this way. Being the hot weather there was no duck or snipe shooting. But there was a small "tent club"; and we used to go pig-sticking once a week. Fatehgarh was on the edge of the old bed of the Ganges known as the Bhura Ganga which extended almost up to Agra. It was here a broad extent of

dazzling white sand, with water-melon beds and patches of thick *jao* about six to eight feet high, and dry channels having almost vertical banks. It harboured many boar.

From Fatehgarh, a morning after pig called for no complicated arrangements and entailed little expense. We sent on our mounts overnight to the meet and rode out ourselves in the early morning. For beaters there were plenty of cultivators only too glad to earn a small sum. The commissariat arrangements were spartan: some slices of cold goat (called mutton) or hard-boiled eggs. For drinks we had whiskey and soda or bottled beer. There was no ice, and to keep our drinks fairly cool some of the beaters carried on their heads large water-melons in which round holes were cut and the bottles inserted up to their necks. It was a primitive form of ice-chest, but it worked. I had no idea before how cold the flesh of a water-melon remains even when growing in a blazing hot river bed. It is partly due to the fact that where the melons grow the water level is close to the surface of the ground. Very sour and turpentiny, a few "country" mangoes from the roadside completed our breakfast. We were usually a field of some half-dozen spears, and always "found". My excitable Satan was of no use, and I had to rely on my stolid old Tommy.

The going was extremely blind, and there were many big patches of *jao* almost stiff enough to pull one out of the saddle, and high enough to blind one's mount. In one I had an exciting three minutes. Tommy pecked over a hole and came down. I was luckily thrown clear, and held on to my spear and reins. Master boar was snorting and grunting only a few yards away, and I found it very difficult to mount

again, with my spear and spurs catching in the *jao*—we used the long underhand spear—and the nervous and excited Tommy jiggering round as I tried to get my foot into the stirrup. I finally succeeded, and we were out into the open. I achieved one “first spear”, and so won my “tushes”. None of us, however, could compete with the District Magistrate on his sixteen-hand Waler. Nevertheless, it was great fun.

I have never hunted at home, though I have chased the jackal in India. But I imagine that pig-sticking, with all the hazards of unknown blind country and the thrill of a fight with a very fierce and dangerous quarry, who can, and often does, rip the belly of a horse, and of its rider, if unhorsed, must be even more exciting. So enjoyable were our runs after pig that instead of returning home before the sun was dangerously high, we often did not get back till nearly noon. Then followed the luxury of a swim in the Club bath. An added joy for me was to race the length of the bath with the wildly excited Dinah yapping and scratching my bare back. This may seem a curious pleasure, but I enjoyed it fully as much as my dog. Then followed breakfast and a sleep. It has remained in my memory that a favourite meal consisted of roast quail stuffed with a green chili, washed down with vermouth and soda. We ought all to have died of sunstroke, heat apoplexy or, in due course, of abscess of the liver.

We wore sun helmets of one sort or the other; and I have always marvelled at the toughness of the “hog hunters” of former generations depicted in old lithographs and prints as wearing small hats or huntsmen’s caps. Those were the days of bottled beer, brandy

pawnee, and abscess of the liver. It was a case of the survival of the fittest—as is shown by the headstones in the up-country cemeteries.

On the Ganges, somewhere near the native city, there was a perpetually smoking Hindu burning *ghat*; and it was an unpleasing sight to see charred human corpses floating downstream, often accompanied by a crowd of greedily feeding shrimps. Shrimp curry, a favourite dish of the mess cook, was a thing to be avoided.

There was also excellent black buck-shooting some miles away. For this we had to start overnight. As one of our party was an official on the Rajputana Malwa State Railway, we had the use of his private saloon, in which we could sleep to the number of four. During the night the carriage was uncoupled at the rendezvous station, and early next morning the local *shikari* would turn up to guide us to the herd. The procedure was to approach the feeding ground on a country cart with solid wooden wheels, drawn by a pair of bullocks, led by its owner, and guided by the *shikari*. The buck were so accustomed to the creaking of these carts that they did not take alarm, and it was possible to approach them unsuspected by circling round at a distance which gradually decreased until the animals were within range, when the *sahib*, with the *shikari* in attendance, would quietly drop from the cart on to his belly. The cart, meanwhile, squeaked its way onwards.

On my first attempt I duly performed my part of this ritual and took careful aim with my Winchester at what I thought was the leader of the herd. There was a puff of dust under his belly. He flung up his head and gazed in my direction, as did the rest of the animals. Before they took fright there was time for a

second shot. “*Marao*” (shoot), whispered the *shikari*. I fired a second shot. Again I missed. The whole herd had by now begun to move. I fired a third time. Not a buck fell. By now the old *shikari*, who had never seen a rifle which could fire more than two shots, lost his head. “*Marao*,” he shouted delightedly. His excitement was infectious, I grew “trigger happy” and obediently pumped up another round, and again squeezed the trigger. With no result. It then became a fantastic duet—“*Marao*”—bang! “*Marao*”—bang! until my magazine was empty. By now there was no more to be seen than a cloud of dust in the distance, and a pile of brass cartridge cases by my side. My disappointment did not lessen my admiration at the astonishing and graceful bounds of the vanishing deer—a beautiful sight.

There was no more shooting to be had that day. The only thing, until the cart came round to pick me up, was to offer a drink to the *shikari*, who, I knew, was of low caste, and would accept. He did, and at once placed his cupped hands to his mouth and without winking, gulped my nearly full flask of whiskey. It was I, and not he, who said “when”. Then, considerably crestfallen, back to the red-hot little wayside station for a bath and breakfast. We spent the rest of the torrid day in the waiting room, singing to the banjos of our railway friend and myself, and sleeping till the next train back to Fatehgarh picked us up in the afternoon.

The other banjoist was a big, fat man, and as he sat cross-legged on the ground, pyjama-shirt open, playing his instrument, he looked like a Buddha of melting lard. He happened to be the nephew of the then Archbishop of Calcutta. I wondered what his uncle

would have thought of him as he sat on the floor singing “The Lincolnshire Poacher”, and other ditties.

On my next expedition I was luckier. Unrattled by the *shikari's* excitement, I brought down a fine buck. While it was still living the old man whipped out a knife and cut its throat, so that he and his Muslim pals could eat it. The glazing eyes of the beautiful creature bleeding its life out at my feet filled me with remorse. It was enough ! I felt I never wanted to slay another buck, and I never tried.

Fatehgarh was a sociable little station, perhaps all the more chummy on account of its comparative smallness. In addition to the military, there were a few civil officials—a judge, a magistrate, police officer, civil surgeon, public works and railway officials. Two or three of us subalterns made an attempt to return the hospitality we had received, by giving an *al fresco* dinner by moonlight on the Ganges. We were to drift down stream to a spot a few miles below Fatehgarh and be met there by our *tumtums*. It was *al fresco* all right. It was also a fiasco. The dinner, for about sixteen, was on board a washed, swept and garnished flat-bottomed boat, something like a lighter. At first all went well. As always, the servants had prepared the table perfectly with some of the mess plate, cut flowers, table lamps, etc. The cook had excelled himself. The big moon shone and all went well for a time. Then one of the sudden dust storms common at that season smote us. All the lights were blown out, except the few hurricane lanterns. The moon was obscured by the swirling clouds of dust from offshore and we were all nearly suffocated. The rain finally poured down; and it was a draggled band of merry-makers who landed at some distance short of

our intended destination, and waited until our transport could be collected. In the circumstances the thanks we received from our guests sounded rather forced. My banjo suffered more than I did from that night's entertainment, which we did not attempt to repeat. We had done our bit !

Once my protective groynes were finished and sufficiently tested by the onset of the monsoon, my work was over; and I returned to the normal routine of Lucknow, more central and socially varied, but without pig-sticking or buck-shooting at your door.

In the cold weather I paid a return visit of some weeks to Fatehgarh. The Cameronians had been relieved by the Royal Irish Regiment. The Mess was in the same bungalow. But there was no Dinah. As she was expecting pups I had been forced to leave her in Lucknow. . My work of maintaining and repairing the river protection continued. By way of amusement, instead of pig-sticking we had good duck and snipe shooting close by, and plenty of tennis.

These changes of station accentuated in my mind the contrast between the life of the *sahibs* at a big place, such as Lucknow, and a little place like Fatehgarh. And there were hundreds of small civil stations in what used to be called the "Mofussil", much smaller than Fatehgarh and more like India than the Presidency towns—Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, or even the big upcountry stations. In them life was more what my father and grandfather had known in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

On getting back to Lucknow I suffered a grievous loss. Dinah had been attacked by distemper. When she heard the wheels of my *tumtum*, and my voice, she crawled out into the verandah, licked my hand

and died. She had managed to hang on until her master's return.

The following hot weather I took three months leave to study the language at Murree, north of Rawalpindi on the road into Kashmir. It was a health resort for British troops in the Punjab and was in the lovely scenery of the foothills of the Himalayas. The sudden change from the heat and the sweaty atmosphere of the Plains can be imagined. I was in a chummery of five officers—one in the Bedfords, a Gurkha and two Sappers. I bought a pony and engaged a *munshi*, who gave me a lesson every morning in Urdu. He was a refined and cultured Muslim gentleman whose Urdu contained perhaps a little more Persian and Arabic than was required for my examination. Urdu was the *lingua franca* of India.

Murree was full of officers on leave for the hot weather, with wives and children, and also "grass widows". On a humbler scale life was that of the Simla of the Hawksbee era as dramatised and exaggerated by Kipling. The atmosphere was subtly different from that of Lucknow. The population was different. It was Punjabi and more virile. Murree was not so far from the Frontier, and that fact was a subconscious source of pride to all sections of the military. Looked at from that place, Lucknow was definitely "down country". In military circles at that period there was a distinct gradation in the estimate of the three Presidencies. There was the Punjab Army, the Bengal Army, the Bombay Army, and the Madras Army, in that order. There was decidedly a certain amount of cliquishness and snobbery. Its spirit is illustrated by a story of two officers of the Punjab forces discussing a third of the Bombay

Army, at the same camp of exercise. "Do you know what so and so calls a *choki* (Urdu for chair)?" "No." "He calls it a *curci*" (Mahrati for chair). "Does he? The brute!"

Owing to my limited knowledge and experience I have so far not attempted to give any account of the political and social changes going on below the surface when I was in India. Of course, they were bubbling up, but were still underground and did not obtrude themselves on the care-free and sports-loving souls of young officers whose professional interest was almost entirely centred on the North-West Frontier and possible developments in that direction. All we saw of internal trouble were the periodic communal fights between Muslims and Hindus. As I have written, before I left India I was to have a closer personal acquaintance with such trouble than was pleasant.

But even fifty years ago there were signs that our illogical position in India could not last for ever, particularly in harmonious combination with the political consciousness being acquired by the clever young Indians in the Universities in India and at home.

Few of us studied the history of India, even from the time of Clive, and fewer attempted to analyse the relations between the handful of British and the many millions of Indians. It was obviously an unstable equilibrium, in which force played a part. But its maintenance was by no means due to physical force alone. The moral factor played a great part. It was our sense of justice and fair play and honesty, despite many departures from a high standard of conduct, that maintained the situation.

In my time, both as a child and a young officer, the vast bulk of the Indian population on the whole had

confidence, and justly so, in the *sahibs*. Even the intelligentsia shared in this confidence, and often traded on it, though the most politically minded would not admit to this. I remember on two or three occasions when I was out duck-shooting in the District, that I was approached by the head man of a village and asked to settle some local dispute—usually about land—between villagers. I had to explain that it was not my duty to adjudicate in disputes, and that I knew nothing about the Law. The matter would have to be referred to the local magistrate, whose duty it was. But both disputants usually begged me to give a decision. They would abide by my judgment sooner than appeal to the magistrate. I was a *sahib*. He was a *kala admi* (black man). What they meant by this was explained by that indescribable but perfectly intelligible gesture, a shrug of the shoulders and the rolling of finger and thumb together ! I was wise enough never to get enmeshed in what would have been a web of false evidence and contradictory lying, a great part of which I should not have understood. But I was impressed by the request more than once made.

At Lucknow during the cold weather there was the usual round of amusements and gaieties culminating in the Race Week in February, when the Civil Service Cup, famous all over India, was run. For this, Dilkusha was crowded.

With my second hot weather I realized the truth of what I had been so often told that it would be worse than the first—when one's blood has not been enfeebled. Prickly heat grew more malevolent and boils began to show their ugly heads. Incidentally, talking of boils, I passed my examination for the Lower Standard.

In August, 1893, I took three months' privilege leave, saved up at the rate of one month per year, and went home. There would have been time for a trip to Japan, but I had a reason, as will be seen, for going to England. I sailed from Bombay on the 11th August by second-class P. & O., in company with numerous other subalterns who had no time to waste on the voyage and no money to pay for a P. & O. first-class fare. Before embarking, I had an unpleasant experience. After passing the night before I sailed with friends on Malabar Hill, I drove direct to the docks, some four miles distant, in a "*fitten ghari*"—an open phaeton cab drawn by a pair of ponies. A great part of the journey lay along Grant Road, an unsavoury main artery through the native city. We had gone about halfway when I heard that menacing sound of the voices of a multitude raised in anger. It grew louder; and I asked the driver—a Muslim—what it meant. He said he thought it was a riot. He was right, for very shortly we drove into the thick of a large mob charging towards us, brandishing *lathis* (long bamboo staves, sometimes loaded at the end), shouting the Muslim battlecry of "*Din, Din*". I told the driver to whip up his ponies, and stood up behind him, ready to snatch the reins if necessary.

But the crowd was looking for Hindus and not for *sahibs*. As we passed through it at full gallop one or two had a swipe at me, denting my hard polo hat and bruising my arms. This was an affront which one could not take lying down, and I told the driver to pull up whilst I got out to avenge the insult. He was a sensible fellow. He did not pull up, but begged me to sit tight. I took his advice. If I had not I might well have been killed—just for fun. As it was, the

mob automatically parted to let the charging vehicle through, with no more than a smack at the occupant. As we passed through the tail end of the mob, I saw drawn up in a side street a detachment of Mounted Police. The officer in charge explained that a serious Hindu-Muslim riot had started and had grown beyond the power of the police to control, and that he had sent for the military.

At the docks nothing whatever was known of the trouble. I was in time ! The *ghari-wallah* had played up; and I handed him all the silver in my pocket—a considerable sum—which he well deserved. For, had he pulled up in sympathy with his excited co-religionists, my goose would have been cooked.

We sailed within half-an-hour. At Aden we received news of what had happened. According to the cables, there had been bad trouble, and British troops, including guns, had taken a hand. So far as I can remember, the schlemozzle had started in the usual way—by the Muslims killing a cow in a Hindu temple or the Hindus throwing a dead pig into a mosque.

On board we were a happy crowd, all going the right way. One man, a police officer old enough to know better, was so elated and careless as to sit on deck without his *topee*. In a few minutes his bald head was like a lobster. Some one told him to rub vaseline on it. The result was startling. His head was covered with bubble-like blisters. With the blue cotton-wool he was wearing in his ears he was a weird sight.

And so on to Brindisi. Thence to travel to Calais by the “ P. & O. Special ”, which started as soon as we landed, would have saved some hours in time but to proceed second-class in the ordinary express—as we did—saved several pounds in cash. The journey had

its amusing side. There were four of us subalterns in the carriage. It was August, and hot even to us so recently from India. At one station we bought some *chianti* in a long-necked flask which had no cork. But it was so nasty that we could not drink it until an amused Italian pointed out the globule of oil on top of the wine—which acted as a cork—and showed us how to jerk it out of the flask. All our fellow-travellers were friendly, one lady extremely so. But as they knew no English, French or Hindustani, and we knew no Italian, conversation was largely limited to signs. We passed one unrestful night. All the stations appeared to have a turntable at each end, so that as we rumbled along the main line we received a double set of jolts and bangs at each. We skirted Paris by the ceinture railway.

From Paris we four were alone in our compartment. On nearing Calais there was a contretemps. Each of us had in his hand-baggage a good “Europe” suit in which to cut a dash on landing. We decided to put these on before crossing the Channel, but before undressing one of us noticed a small window between our compartment and the next one on either side. In each was a small ring, obviously that of a blind. For decency’s sake he pulled the two rings down. He then read a little notice above each ring to the effect that it was the *signal d’alerte*. “My God, chaps, I’ve pulled the alarm signal !” We looked out. Sure enough, from each side of our carriage stuck out a tell-tale tin flag. The engine whistled, the brakes came on, and the train pulled up with a jerk at a wayside station. An excited guard ran down the platform. I was in the corner seat next to it, and without enquiry he angrily accused me of stopping the “*rapide*”. He was almost as het up as the guard in Kipling’s *An Error in the*

Fourth Dimension. I was so indignant that my small amount of French evaporated into Hindustani. There was then a heated tri-lingual wrangle in French, English and Urdu. We demanded an interpreter, and were told that there would be one awaiting us at Calais—about ten minutes ahead. Hastily we finished dressing and held a council of war, at which we unanimously decided that whatever happened we were not going to languish in a French dungeon whilst legal proceedings were started. The interpreter at Calais—I think a man from Cook's—was our ally at once. To the *chef de gare* he explained: “*Mais Monsieur le chef, ces messieurs sont des officiers anglais, très modestes.*” The *chef* burst into a roar of laughter: “*Mon Dieu! La modestie des anglais!*” There was the rustle of a note in the direction of a rather discomfited guard and there was much saluting and hat-raising. With sighs of relief we rushed on to the *quai* and on to the boat. Again I was just in time.

Had I not known it I would have guessed that Dover was dear old England. It was a Sunday, and the only refreshment we could get when we landed was stale railway-refreshment-room buns. From Dover I travelled by local steamer to Deal, where my family was staying; and thence next day I went on to London to see the girl I hoped to marry. She was the daughter of my second cousin, Major Sir Edward Clayton. I was accepted.

I was due to return to India in a few weeks' time. As I did not think that the climate would suit my future wife we agreed that I should go out alone, and return after the end of my five years' tour, which meant that I should be back home in about eighteen months.

As may be imagined, time at home flew until I once more found myself at Charing Cross *en route* for Brindisi, again by the ordinary express. We reached Brindisi some hours before the special train, and slept on board our ship. Here my night was rather disturbed, as the meat chute was alongside my cabin, and there was a continual intermittent sound which went on all night. "Four quarters of beef" from above on deck. Then a rumble and a bang and the same words rang out from, I supposed, the cold storage chamber in the bowels of the ship.

On deck next morning I witnessed an amusing but also depressing scene. A Sidi (Zanzibari) stoker with his shiny face frosted dull with coal dust to the *patina* of a charcoal biscuit, came up for a breath of air. As he leaned over the side swabbing his face, a small Italian youth, carrying an accordion and a tray full of plaster casts, approached. The two conversed in English of a sort. The boy tried to persuade the black man to buy a bust of the Virgin Mary. Like the rest of his kind he was as persistent as a tick. The stoker refused each offer more and more emphatically until at last the language of the two made me blush for my native tongue, especially when I recalled its subject. As a sign of the refining influence of British civilization it was humiliating.

Next morning we had, in a way, a lively time. Mandolinists and guitar-players circled round us in small boats giving us "*Santa Lucia*", "*Funiculi Funicula*" and "*Daisy Bell*", which was then on its way round the world. We never got away from "*A Bicycle Made For Two*". Port Said, the Canal, Aden, and then the smell of the Bazaar, the cocoanut husks floating on the yellow-green water, Elephanta Island,

Bombay Harbour, and the Apollo Bunder. India once more.

At Lucknow I was at home again, with my old servants and ponies and the inevitable flying foxes squabbling and snarling in the big mango trees in the compound. There followed the usual round of work, with visits to the out-stations. On one stay at Sitapur, which was a particularly snaky spot, I was put up by the detachment of the East Lancashire Regiment. As I was undressing in the adjutant's bungalow a krait glided across the floor. I was in slippers and could not jump on it. So I picked up the nearest book—about six inches thick—from the table and dropped it on the head of the beast. That did the trick. My host was Tommy Capper, the late Major-General Sir Thompson Capper, killed on the Western front in 1915 when leading the famous Seventh Division. Capper was a most zealous and almost fanatically gallant officer. Those who remember him in the nineties, when a regimental officer, will not be surprised to learn that the book nearest to hand in his bungalow was the Manual of Military Law.

I was fond of water-colour sketching and was inspired by some lovely sketches done by a friend, one Lancelot Graham, in the Horse Gunners, on his way into Kashmir via the Pir Panjal Pass. I also discovered through another pal—a ferret who was always studying the regulations—that a military officer employed in the Public Works could obtain three months leave in India to study for promotion. India included Kashmir.

This was my chance. I applied for and got my leave. It was too late to join forces with a friend and share with him a reasonably accessible *nullah* (valley) and stake out a claim to shoot markhor, *ovis ammon* and

other horned sheep. So I determined not to hurry, but to leave the railway near Lahore and march out into Kashmir on foot by the old Mogul Emperors' road which skirts a corner of the Hill State of Poonch and crosses the Himalayas by the Pir Panjal Pass.

There was not much to do by way of preparation except to get a pair of ammunition boots from store and soak them for a week in castor oil. How they stank ! All my belongings were packed in "*kiltas*", conical baskets designed to contain a full load for a coolie's back. I did not take my Hindu bearer Buldeo, who was a child of civilization and not accustomed to roughing it in the wilds. My Muslim *khitmatgar*, Elahi Buksh, could act as cook and bearer and eat the same food as I. He was a witless ass, and squinted, but he was willing and trustworthy. With an advance of two months' pay, a thick suit and a new pair of boots, he was happy and proud to be my head man.

After one false start owing to the bungling of Elahi we left Lucknow by the night train for Gujerat, our point of departure from the railway just north of Lahore. I had as a travelling companion for this part of the journey one of the two Sapper subalterns who had supplanted me in the Survey of India. He was an old friend from Chatham days, and on his way back from Burma. He was not enthusiastic about the Survey. Another fellow passenger was an English jockey employed by the Maharajah of Patiala, a most entertaining man full of backstairs information as to the life of an Indian prince and his many hangers-on. After resting during the heat of the day in a *dak bungalow* near Gujerat, we started on our trek northwards, the column consisting of myself, Elahi Buksh, second in command, and a cortège of thirteen locally

recruited porters who each carried a *kilta* or equivalent load. Most of the porters were "hillmen", (*gujers*), herdsmen who drove cattle in and out of Kashmir. They were good-natured, pleasant people with enormously developed calves.

The track I was following, though rough, had been used by the Mogul Emperors on their journeys to and from India. It was quite a good path, the stages marked by rest-houses with walls, and often part of a dilapidated roof, still standing. These *serais* were usually in very lovely spots alongside the river Tawi, which was a famous stream for *mahseer*. I tried fishing once or twice, with no luck. The beauty of the scenery led me to pay more attention during the daylight hours to sketching. At one place, Naoshera, a terrific thunder-storm kept me awake till dawn as it rolled round and round the hills. In the almost continuous lightning I read on the walls above my bed the records of numerous sportsmen who had tried their luck at *mahseer*. Almost all had been tempted to indulge in verse, following the example of the first sportsman. I recorded some efforts in my diary. The most recent inscription was in prose, by one D. H. Cameron, R.A., a contemporary of mine at the "Shop". "Killed at Naoshera on 1st May, 1890, with a rod, single gut, *mahseer*, weight 32 lb., girth 22 inches, extreme length 3 ft. 11 ins."

One inscription in verse was that of a pessimist:

"I am no poet
I tell you what
I'll try my hand
Upon the spot
It's too warm here
Fishing's rot
Please put a penny in the slot." H. B.

This drew a reply:

“ O funny H. B., like many a fish unknown
 Laughs at our *lines* but dares not sign his own
 Whoever he be, I cannot now say more
 His name should bring him more credit than his
 verse.” “ Mahseer ”.

As I was wide awake I thought I would “ have a go ”:
 “ O, poor H. B., *why* did you play the ass here ?
 You say you cannot write, to the heat you are a
 martyr

When did you write ? Even were it only last year
 Console yourself, your silly rhyme has raised some
 honest laughter

Why did you write ? perhaps the time to pass here ?
 Well, next time you do so make your doggerel
 smarter

For though you don’t like fishing, not even for a
 mahseer

You’ve raised one this time, and he’s proved a
 tartar ”. “ A real poet, May 1894.”

I was so pleased with my rhyme to “ mahseer ” that
 I recorded my effort in my diary.

All the first part of my march was up the gorges of the Tawi River, which we crossed and recrossed many times, through most beautiful scenery with many waterfalls and torrents. As we got higher up, the crossings were more often than not snow bridges. At a spot called Rajaori I had a pleasant surprise. I ran across a Jummu Imperial Service Mountain Battery commanded by a subaltern who had been a cadet at Woolwich with me—now Lieut.-General Sir George MacMunn, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., D.S.O. With his wife he was on his way to Gilgit with a mountain battery

which he was going to leave there in exchange for a battery being relieved. We had a very pleasant two days together, after which we parted, he on his pony *en route* for Gilgit, with his wife on a *doolie* carried by four hill men and I, on my flat feet, on my way to Srinagar. A delightful interlude.

And I soon left the Tawi River and began climbing up round the hill-sides where the path led round an endless succession of slopes, each of which seemed to promise a view of the Vale of Kashmir round the next bend, but only produced a repetition of the boresome process we had been through so often. Up ravines on either hand were numerous glorious waterfalls of a small volume of water tumbling down from a great height, with frequently a rainbow effect thrown up in the mist.

The halting place before the actual pass was reached, was a small village perched on the exposed desolate brow of a hill. My night's lodging was a small flat-roofed stone hut too low to stand up in: but in view of a storm obviously brewing in the hills I preferred it to any tent. I was right. Some other travelling officer arrived on his way out of Kashmir. I warned him of the coming storm. But he knew better and pitched his tent, which was shortly blown down the cliff-side.

It was one of the worst nights I have experienced. I had my camp bed, and wore my clothes with two pairs of socks and three blankets and "Bessie" on my bed. Doves of buffaloes and calves passed through the village street all night. In the blizzard I felt sorry for them and the herdsmen. Two or three of the former bumbled into my room and, in spite of the barking of the frantic Bessie, snorted in my face and

put their hooves through my hat on the floor, which grew inches deep in dung. Then there were the fleas!

Next morning I crossed the pass at Alliabad Serai some 11,000 feet up, and thence gradually descended some 3,000 feet. The path was crowded with cattle going into Kashmir for the hot weather. On this stage I was reduced by hunger to beg food from the cultivators, for I over-ran my supplies. I have never been so hungry. The yellow maize *chupattis*—conical loaf of sugar and *ghi* (clarified butter)—which I got for a small sum, were delicious.

I got proof here of what cowards the Kashmiris are, though physically great brawny specimens. A small boy had been hit on the head with an axe by a Pathan—so they said. But neither the boy's father nor his friends had done anything, because the assailant was a Pathan. Next day we dropped down into the first little hamlet of Kashmir through fields and meadows of buttercups, violets and forget-me-nots. The flat-roofed huts, covered with earth on top, were a mass of irises and other flowers. Ahead down below, under the glorious planes and walnut trees, we got glimpses of the lovely vale of Kashmir shimmering into the distance, about the beauty of which the poet Moore rhapsodized in *Lalla Rukh*.

All the fields here were terraced on what the soil erosion experts now call the contour system of cultivation, with the water channels gently running round almost on the level, fed by small canals.

The people had changed as regards character and clothing. They were ruddy. Both men and women wore similar white and shapeless homespun smocks. The only difference in their outward appearance was that the men wore turbans and the women had their

back hair in pigtails, largely artificial. The women also seemed to do all the work. I was pestered by men with bundles of chits, who had got news of my approach and offered themselves to me as *shikaris* and boatmen. I spent one morning under a huge walnut tree eating as many nuts as covered my camp bed, bought for the equivalent of twopence. All around were dog roses and—most homely touch—I saw a small tortoiseshell butterfly. This I chased, hat in hand, for auld lang syne, much to the astonishment of my *cortège*.

Here I was met by an energetic and enterprising boatman, who had walked out some miles up from the Jhelum to meet me, with a view to business, having been informed by his intelligence system of my approach. He was a cheerful plausible ruffian, and I rewarded his enterprise by hiring from him a living boat (*doonga*), and a cooking boat (*shikara*) which I was to find on the nearest creek of the Jhelum, a few miles ahead, on the following day. He was to go ahead and get everything ready. Next day I reached the river and embarked on my fleet of two vessels. My boat was about fifty feet long and six feet broad, with a coil-up matting roof, divided in the middle by a partition. I occupied the larger portion of the boat and the boatman's wife and family the other. The furniture of my apartment consisted of my camp bed and basin, a small table, two *kiltas* of clothes, my rifle, gun, rod and banjo, and Bessie. Most comfortable and snug. Elahi did the cooking in the *shikara*. We started off for Srinagar, where I hoped to pick up my mail, and drifted down with the stream all night. The river curled round like a snake: and we could see Hari Parbat fort, on a hill near the capital, for hours,

without apparently getting any closer to it. The valley was full of beautiful, stately trees, tall Lombardy poplars, giant planes, and along the banks of the river mulberry trees dropping ripe fruit into the stream. Reaching Srinagar, which lies along the Jhelum—its main street—next morning, I soon found the Post Office, the Munshi Bagh or camping ground for married sahibs and their families, and the Chenar Bagh, where the bachelors pitched their tents. I met many friends in both camps. But as I was very comfortable in my boat I stayed on board.

After two or three days I had my second essay after big game. As it was too late to get to an unoccupied valley in the mountains to bag any sort of horned sheep, which I was not very keen to do, not being interested in "record" heads, or any heads, I decided to stay on the river and sketch. But I did make one expedition after brown bear under the expert guidance of one Mahmood, a bandy-legged little *shikari*, who was reputed to be the perfect Nimrod. Going back a few miles up river to a spot where he swore there were always bears, both black and brown, we landed before dusk. The plan was to go up amongst the ripe mulberry trees, then in fruit, and wait till dark until we heard Master Bruin scrambling up a tree, then have a "sitting shot" at the beast as he ate.

This plan we carried out, and waited some time under a tree on which some bear had already been feeding the night before. Meanwhile, as it grew darker we could hear the hoarse cough of a leopard in the neighbourhood. Though the sound was never very near, we had to keep a sharp look-out all round. We two sat close together on the ground, and Mahmood in a low whisper gave me some hints in woodcraft,

tracking and venery. Amongst other things he told me in very graphic language, that sometimes a bear and a leopard would meet at the foot of a tree and circle round it stalking each other. Then the bear would halt and suddenly show his head in full view round the trunk. This was more than the leopard could stand, and he would give a terrific smack at the bear's face—which would, of course, be withdrawn in time—and bury his claws in the bark of the tree. The bear would repeat the process on the other side, with a similar result. Then, as soon as the claws of both paws of the leopard were too deep in the bark to be withdrawn quickly, Master Bruin would come round and jump on the leopard's back and give one of his famous hugs.

While I was listening open-mouthed to this "story of the wild", Mahmood put his hand softly on my arm. Something was moving. I heard the crackling of twigs as some large animal shambled up towards our tree, and then the rattle of claws as he climbed up about forty feet. This was followed by the noise of branches snapping as he pulled the ripe fruit to his mouth, and of guzzling. It was just possible to discern a dark shape against the starlit sky. I felt sorry for the poor, greedy, unsuspecting brute up aloft, and stood with rifle ready. Mahmood signed to me to wait. I had the neck of the animal well covered, as I thought, when Mahmood squeezed my arm, and I squeezed the trigger. There was a flash, a deafening report in the silence of the night, and then amid a volley of growls and grunts and the sound of smashing branches, a thud on the ground as the bear dropped plump, not four feet from me, and charged away more like a wild boar than a bear. By pure good luck he did not come

my way. It was all so quick and at such close quarters in the dark that I could not give him a second shot of the six I had in my magazine. We could hear him tearing his way down the hill-side. He was hit. Next morning we followed the blood-stains for some distance. As they were so small, and decreased in size every ten yards, we came to the conclusion that he had received only a superficial wound from my light solid bullet, and had got right away.

The *shikari* entreated me to stay until the next night and have a try at another bear. But I was not interested. I am afraid I have not the lust for killing. The bears, black and brown, were comparatively harmless, unless molested, when they could be dangerous.

Next morning we embarked and we floated peacefully back to Srinagar. The city, lying on both sides of the Jhelum, was most picturesque, with its comparatively tall buildings with many latticed, over-hanging wooden balconies, and its timber cantilever bridge spanning the rapid stream. All traffic was on the water, which was crowded with small craft darting in every direction. The view along the river, which reflected all the colours, was very gay and attractive. Nearly all the riverside buildings were tall and imposing from a little way off. But the glamour was dispelled on closer inspection. Even the Maharajah's Palace, shining white in the sunlight, with its curved bow front and rows of windows painted vermilion with a blue bull's eye in the centre of each, was crude and tawdry. One edifice which stood out was a temple, with its elongated high dome sheathed in shining metal.

I suddenly remembered that after all I was on leave to study for my examination for military promotion.

To get away from the "social whirl" of the Chenar Bagh I went off a few miles up river to read some of the books I had brought with me to study. It rained solidly for three days, which enabled me to read Prince Krafft's *Artillery* right through twice. He was then the greatest authority on that Arm. I can remember even now the most important lesson I received from this master's words ; that our accepted theory, that to lose guns to the enemy was a disgrace to be avoided at all costs was wrong. His argument was that it was no disgrace to lose guns provided that they had taken their toll of the enemy first. It was partly the continuance of our old tradition right up to the Boer War that sometimes caused us such heavy casualties. This was markedly the case at Colenso in 1899, when we lost so many valuable lives in the effort to save the guns.

When my month's hire of my boats ceased, I determined to go up to Gulmerg, a sort of hill station, a few miles out from Srinagar, where many of the visitors migrated for a change of air, though this did not seem to me necessary. My belongings were debarked from my "fleet" and brought to a room I hired over a shop on the bank of the Jhelum. When my coolies jumped on to the matting on the concrete floor of my room there was a curious and repulsive sight. Each started to hop from one leg to the other and to scratch. I could not fathom what had happened until they said, "*Pissoo* (fleas), *sahib*". I looked down. The matting was literally vibrating, like the surface of a pebble beach in a hot sun. I, in my putties and thick boots, had so far not felt anything. But my coolies were bare-footed. In a moment I had chased them out of the room with all my belongings. We then took the

matting outside, made a bonfire, scrubbed the floor, and marched off the few miles to Gulmerg, where I found more friends, and pitched my tent. It was a pleasant spot in a gentle declivity in the low hills, with huts and tents dotted about and the ground carpeted with every sort of wild flower. There was also a nine-hole golf course.

I had been in Gulmerg for two days when I was recalled by telegram to Lucknow, where a severe epidemic of cholera had broken out. It was a grim journey south from Rawalpindi, with rain all the way. I found no panic when I reached Dilkusha, though as the number of cases increased daily there was a sombre background to our thoughts, and sub-conscious speculation as to whose turn would come next. Our position was much the same as that of the populace of London during the Blitz some forty years later—a matter of blind chance.

It was part of my duty to plot on a large-scale map of the cantonment the incidence of the fresh cases reported, in order to discover if possible any pattern in the course followed by the disease, which was curiously erratic. Analysis led first to the suspicion, and then to the certainty that its source lay in the sand of the River Goomti, used for the barrack-room filters, which had not been properly roasted according to Regulations.

The normal lowered vitality of all in the steaming period towards the end of the rains was accentuated by the prevalent nervousness; and at the frequent funerals men of the firing parties fell down in a dead faint between the three volleys and the sounding of the “Last Post”—which is at all times a sad and poignant call. The funeral service, coming after the slow march

all the way to the cemetery in the heavy sweaty heat, to the strains of the Dead March in Saul, proved too much for many of the men, who were still young. I associate this period also with the sickly-sweet scent of the *nim* trees, which was always overpowering at this season of the year.

As the weather grew colder and the troops were moved into isolated camps some way out, the disease gradually died down and life resumed its normal course. But we had had a dread experience which was not at once forgotten, accustomed though we were to the ever-present closeness of death.

It was between now and Christmas that I first met Sir Ian Hamilton, then Inspector-General of Musketry in India. He was visiting Lucknow on a tour of inspection. Whether he was with the Commander-in-Chief or not I cannot remember. All I can recall is that one day I received a message from Headquarters at Lucknow to say that the Inspector-General of Musketry with his wife and staff wished to watch the finish of a point-to-point race being held near Dilkusha from the roof of an old house called Bibiapur Kothi near the finish of the course. Would the roof be safe, and for how many people?

This was a poser. I had never seen the house, but I well knew the condition of many of these old buildings, even of the palaces. The flat roofs were carried across a wide span by beams probably eaten through by white ants. They might carry a crowd safely, or might just crumble without warning at any increase in the load placed upon them. It was not possible to estimate even approximately without boring and examining each beam. So far as space was concerned, this roof would accommodate a hundred people easily. But

it was not a question of space. I was not going to take any risks; and played for safety. Neither Ian Hamilton nor anyone of his staff could contradict me, and I reported officially, in my capacity of executive engineer, that the roof could not be guaranteed to carry more than six people.

I was to have ridden in the point-to-point myself. But I gave that up and, trying to look very important, with great ceremony, personally conducted the limited number of spectators up aloft. All went well and everyone had a grand view. It is sometimes useful to be an expert, and perhaps more often to be regarded as one. I can find no reference to this incident in Ian Hamilton's autobiography. I don't expect he ever realized the great risk he had run. I took care to run none myself. I did not meet him again till 1901, in Pretoria, when he was Chief of Staff to Kitchener.

CHAPTER III

SOUTH AFRICA

(1899-1902)

MY suspicions of the storm about to break in South Africa did not take form till the late summer of 1895, shortly after I returned from India.

“ Hairgut, or shave, sir ? ” said the hairdresser, a German, waving me forward to a chair. “ Hairgut,” I replied. He called himself “ Professor ”, which gave me a distaste for that academic title—to be my own thirty years later.

When he started operations he began to gossip. He had recently returned from Johannesburg (he called it “ Yohornesburg ”) where he had spent some years and had saved enough money to come back and open a shop in England. What he had to tell me about the Transvaal was more intriguing than the usual barber’s chatter. I was ignorant of the complicated political and international currents which governed events out there, though I had of course heard of the outrageous behaviour of the Boer Republics towards foreigners settled in their territory, whom they called “ Uitlanders ”. I was quite ready to learn something of that fabulous El Dorado known as the “ Rand ”—whence the gold and millionaires came. So I let him run on.

How far he was really in the know about what was seething under the surface I could not tell; but what he managed to convey to me between each snip of the scissors was sufficiently disturbing, even if exaggerated. He was filled with indignation—maybe assumed to

please me—at the impossible situation created by the intransigence of President Kruger and his government. Things could not go on as they were. If the Boers continued to oppress the foreigners in their country and ignore their just demands the latter were bound to take the law into their own hands, and a clash was inevitable. The position of the Uitlanders was comparable with that of the Israelites in Egypt. I particularly remember this analogy because of the speaker's pronunciation of the word "Pharaoh", and of its inappropriateness, for in the modern case the Israelites did not want to obtain release from their bondage by leaving the country.

Never having met anyone from the Transvaal, I was moved by the story of this man who had, until so recently, been one of the helots upon whose plight he enlarged with such vehemence. To me his words seemed to come straight from the horse's mouth; and it was with a feeling of apprehension, strongly flavoured with bay rum, that I left his saloon, little dreaming that within five years I should make the acquaintance of the Witwatersrand, and for nearly two years be responsible for the defence of those very gold mines which were the main cause of the cataclysm looming ahead.

On the last day of the year came the news of the Jameson Raid, which had crossed the Transvaal border on the 29th December, followed by that of its speedy and ignominious end at Doornkop, near Johannesburg. Like many others, I was surprised and shocked, but what at the time impressed me more than the legal aspect and possible political implications of "Dr. Jim's" precipitate action, was its sheer folly from a military point of view.

There was at first much mystery surrounding the whole business. But in England two of its repercussions were only too clear—its effect on the money-market, and the deep national reaction to the Kaiser's stupid, ill-advised telegram to Kruger. To my unsophisticated mind the slump, which followed the Raid and its dénouement, was a revelation of the extreme sensitiveness of international finance to events happening on the other side of the world. Slumps and booms had not yet come within my ken, and the sudden change-over from the previous prolonged boom, when the wildest speculation had been rampant, was an eye-opener.

When war broke out I was an Assistant Instructor at the School of Military Engineering at Chatham, conducting the annual course of young cavalry officers in pioneer duties—bridging, demolitions, etc. On mobilization the class was at once broken up, and my pupils were dispersed prior to being sent overseas. I recall their exhilaration at the idea of active service. Most of these young bloods looked upon the war as a picnic which would be over by Christmas, and were anxious not to miss "the fun". The cheek of the Boer farmers was colossal: they would be taught a much needed lesson! Within a few hours these subalterns had folded their tents and stolen away—but not silently—to rejoin their regiments. Naturally, with many other officers who had not been mobilized, I applied to be sent out, but received the regulation "raspberry"—that someone had to remain behind to keep the Army going, etc., etc. This was small consolation to those of us whose duties detained them. We did not realize that our chance might come at any time during the next three years.

As a matter of fact, my own departure for the front came by chance, in October, soon after operations had started. A brother assistant instructor, senior to me, was the late Colonel J. C. Matheson, R.E. One day, the Commandant S.M.E.—a Major-General—sent for our immediate chief. As neither he nor my colleague were available, it fell to me to obey the summons.

The Commandant told me that a junior R.E. Officer was required to go out at once to South Africa for bridging duties on the railways, and that he had intended to ask the Major to nominate one of his assistants for the job. In the Major's absence, however, as the matter was urgent, he would detail me. On my pointing out that I was not the senior he replied, "Never mind, it's your luck. Be ready to start in four days."

As I had no wish to play Jacob to the Esau of Matheson, I told the latter what had happened and advised him to see the Commandant at once. He did so ; but the General, who was the type of man who does not find it easy to alter a decision once made, said that he had selected me, and that was that ! I shortly got my embarkation orders. And so it happened that when I went on active service for the first time at the age of thirty-one, it was unintentionally in the rôle of Jacob. Matheson never succeeded in getting out, but passed the whole period of the war grinding in the mill, instructing others, an arduous and essential duty, but one which brought no thrills, no excitements, and no honours. He was a man of great ability and understanding and a loyal, generous comrade ; and the affair made no difference to our friendship, which continued until his death nearly forty years later.

There followed two or three hectic days of personal preparation for active service, including one grisly item—the grinding of my sword, the sinister implication of which rather upset my wife. I felt its edge and point with a sort of unholy thrill. I was no swordsman, and I prayed inwardly that I should never have to use it in earnest. I never did. As a matter of fact, I never wore it after I landed. Not only had the uselessness of this weapon against riflemen by then been realized, but also the unnecessary danger it created for its wearer. The Boer sharpshooters, indeed, could have had no better help to assist them in picking off our leaders. It was astonishing that the power of the modern magazine rifle in the hands of marksmen had not been appreciated sooner. Before I embarked we got the news of the battle of Elandslaagte on the 21st October—my birthday as it happened. Of course we had won. But in the clubs there was dismay at the “butcher’s bill”. Everyone was thinking of friends he had lost. It was all very personal and perhaps petty. In the light of our casualties in the Great War sixteen years later, our consternation at those suffered at Elandslaagte seems ludicrous. But with dismay came fear—not that we should not win, but that the Government would climb down, as it had against the same enemy in 1881, after Majuba.

The fact was we did not realize the strength of the Boers, and, misled by a prolonged period of peace only broken by campaigns against comparatively weak and ill-armed opponents, we were morally, as well as materially, unprepared for their surprising resistance and for the real significance of war. The late General Sir William Butler, who had been in command in South Africa, was one of the few who gauged the

situation. It was rumoured that the Government had been misinformed by Intelligence as to the strength of the enemy. But the Intelligence Manual was captured by the Boers at Elandslaagte, was published in the American newspapers, and proved the accuracy of the "I" forecast. Butler, however, was regarded as an alarmist and his warnings were unheeded. He resigned his post before war broke out.

Waterloo Station, the principal point of departure for our forces, was crowded. So far as I can remember, the troops on my train consisted of detachments of all branches of the Service. There was therefore no band to play us off. But there were noise and bustle in plenty. Along the length of the train parties of men and their friends were lustily singing *Soldiers of the Queen*, the patriotic song of the moment. Though some of the women were weeping, there was much hilarity, natural or assumed.

We sailed in the Union Castle liner *Scot*, one of the most graceful vessels afloat, built on the lines of a yacht. The trip was to me memorable, for I had two big cabins all to myself, an experience I had never had before nor have had since. Incidentally, they were infested by rats. Besides the detachments, we had on board a battalion of the Suffolk Regiment, a truly splendid lot of men, among whom was a large proportion of reservists and countrymen. The troops were kept busy at physical training, which the reservists badly needed, for though magnificent specimens, they were not in the hard condition demanded by active service. Many hours, also, were spent in rifle and revolver practice at towed targets.

My staff consisted of two Quarter-Master-Sergeant Instructors R.E., from the S.M.E., Reid and Murray,

good men, well trained in bridging as practised at home. We had a three hours' conference every morning, our text book being the latest American work on trestle bridging which I had bought, the Americans being the acknowledged authorities on the subject. We learned much that came in useful later on. Though the voyage was physically uneventful, it was not so mentally, and we all anxiously awaited news at Madeira, our only port of call. In these days of wireless it is difficult to realize the suspense at sea in wartime fifty years ago caused by the lack of news. We reached Cape Town on 28th November, to be greeted by the news of the Battle of the Modder River.

The things which at first impressed me in Cape Town were the fleet of huge transports wallowing about in the Bay—striking proof of our command of the sea: the beauty of the city overshadowed by the sombre mass of Table Mountain: the surprisingly fine shops: the mixed population: the diminutive hansom cabs, all driven by Malays: the splendour of the Mount Nelson Hotel and the smartness of the ladies stopping there: and finally, the fact that the bath in my lodgings consisted of a solid block of stone hollowed out. The old yellow-washed Castle, with the Union Jack lazily floating above it, was Army Headquarters and contained the officers' mess. It was in a way nostalgically reminiscent of so many buildings in India. In it, strange though the atmosphere really was, I felt at home.

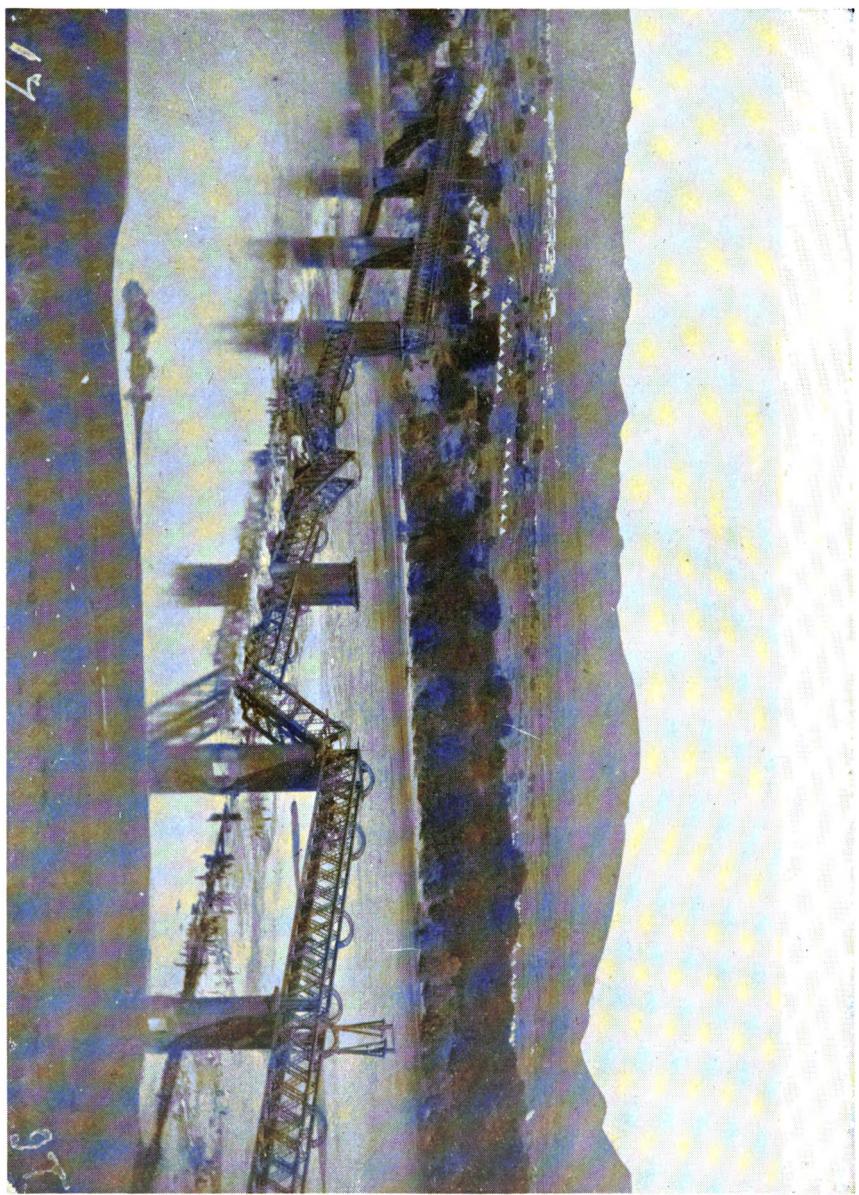
I remained some three weeks in Cape Town—long enough to mix in non-military society and discover the difference between the atmosphere of the people in Cape Colony and those at Home. If we in England had our gods, the South Africans had their own local deities, whose names loomed large in their minds and

conversation. I often lunched at the Civil Service Club, whose members hospitably made us Regular officers honorary members. One day, at lunch, a member kept referring to "Friedie Eckstein", as if his name were familiar to all of us—as it was to most at the table. In all innocence I asked "Who is Friedie Eckstein?" The speaker was almost as shocked as if I had asked who Cecil Rhodes was, or Paul Kruger, or Redvers Buller. I had, of course, heard of the fixed stars of the South African gold-mining industry, such as Wernher and Beit and Barney Barnato, but, though of first magnitude, they were so remote as to be faint. The late Friedie Eckstein was one of the magnates of the gold-mining industry of the Transvaal and head of the Rand Mines Group. Though racially of German origin—as were so many of the "tycoons" of the mining fraternity—and a capitalist, he was a man with a big heart, much respected and liked in South Africa. I was to hear more of him later and to meet him occasionally.

Cape Town, in common with the other ports of Cape Colony and Natal, swarmed with the thousands of refugees of all nationalities and classes who had been driven away from the gold mines of the Rand. Of these, several splendid fighting units, at first almost entirely mounted forces, were formed from the men of British and Colonial stock. Among the refugees in Cape Town were many leading men of the gold mining industry of the Rand—financiers, industrialists, engineers and technicians, some of whom had a clearer conception of the nature of the struggle ahead of us than our Military Authorities.

One such was Mr. Louis I. Seymour, an American citizen and a very well-known and exceptionally able

Norval's Pont; deviation being constructed



mechanical engineer of the Rand Mines Group, who foresaw the immense difficulty there would be in restoring the rail communications which the Boers were bound to destroy as they retired, for which work the few Railway Companies R.E. with the British force would be quite inadequate. To reinforce the latter, he suggested to the Director of Railways, Lieut.-Colonel E. P. C. Girouard, R.E., that a pioneer regiment, trained and equipped for heavy construction work, should be formed from the refugees.

I must say a word about Girouard. He was a French Canadian, commissioned from the R.M. College, Kingston. He had been employed on the Canadian Pacific Railway before he received his commission, and then, as an R.E. officer, had built the railway up the Nile for Kitchener's advance to Omdurman. He was in many ways a remarkable personality, of great initiative and independent character. Physically he was a small man, with a slight cast in one eye. He wore a monocle, and spoke in a rasping staccato voice modelled, we imagined, on that of his Chief in the Soudan.

Girouard was a "card", and many amusing—probably apocryphal—stories were current about him in South Africa. As soon as he was appointed Director of Railways, he is supposed, before leaving London, to have ordered, off his own bat, coal and timber baulks by the shipload, realizing what the scarcity of these supplies in the theatre of operations would be. Naturally, not getting sanction for these purchases from the War Office, he went across to the Colonial Office, where the Colonial Secretary, Joe Chamberlain, gave him the necessary authority.

When the ships arrived in Table Bay, Girouard's action was not approved, and he was told that the cost

of the coal and timber would be debited to him. Unperturbed, he replied that he was quite willing to accept the responsibility. As a matter of fact, he could have sold the cargoes at a great profit. He heard no more. The coal and timber were taken over by the army. And Girouard did not make a fortune !

Another story dates from later on. Some of the Military Railway Staff had at one station appropriated the quarters of the civilian General Traffic Manager, who complained to the Director of Railways. The telegraphic reply was: "G.T.M. can G.T.H." This apparent courtesy was promptly reported to Army Headquarters. On being asked for an explanation the Director stated that the translation of his telegram was— "The General Traffic Manager can get the house".

He welcomed Seymour's suggestion for a unit of Railway troops. But it was not within his competence to sanction the creation of new units, and the proposal was flatly turned down by Army Headquarters. Undeterred, Seymour returned to the charge, and finally succeeded in getting acceptance for his scheme. I knew nothing of the arguments used on either side, or of the decision, until I was informed that the raising of a railway pioneer unit had been sanctioned, and was offered its adjutancy by its Commanding Officer designate, Major J. E. Capper, R.E., now Sir John Capper, a very fine officer, of whom I saw a good deal in two wars.

This rather took my breath away. An adjutant's duties are important and of a rather special nature; and I had never been an adjutant, even of a regular unit, which is a concern running on well established lines and traditions, in fact, a cut and dried job, more

governed by regulations than most. A brand-new irregular unit, with no traditions to guide it, few regulations and fewer trained regular officers, was quite another matter. However, it was to be an engineering regiment, and would build bridges—my line of country. I accepted, and so became Adjutant of the 1st Battalion Railway Pioneer Regiment, a splendid corps, to which I am proud to have belonged. We soon had a recruiting office in Cape Town, next to that of another irregular corps, the South African Light Horse. It was besieged by recruits.

The battalion was to be 1,200 strong, divided in three Wings, each commanded by a major. Seymour was to command the Right Wing, G. A. Goodwin, another prominent mining man, originally a Yorkshire coal miner, the Left Wing, and I was to command the Centre Wing. Such was the First Battalion Railway Pioneer Regiment, the creation of which was due to the initiative and foresight of an American. It is impossible to estimate what it contributed to the success of our advance northwards.

In addition to Capper, now given the temporary rank of Lieut.-Colonel, and myself, we had a few Regular and ex-Regular officers of the Gunners, Sappers and Infantry. Our training camp during formation was at Stellenbosch, some twenty miles from Cape Town. One reason for the selection of this spot was that it was a standing camp, with water laid on, etc. Another was that Stellenbosch was a great hotbed of the Cape Dutch, whose loyalty to the British cause was suspect, and it was considered that the proximity of a British force of over 1,000 men, even if not fully trained, might have a restraining influence, if any

trouble were brewing. Lastly, there was a large British Remount Depôt close by, manned by unarmed *sowars* of the Indian Cavalry, who had come to South Africa for purely remount duties and not to fight. It was to be a "white man's war".

The only natives of India with whom the Dutch and British colonials had ever come into contact, were the petty traders of non-fighting stock, who had crowded into Natal, and to whom the term "coolie" had been indiscriminately applied. But in 1899 I was shocked when I heard my men seriously talking of the *sowars* as "coolie cavalry". I warned them not to be over-heard or they might have their——heads cut off. It was between these Indian traders and the Zulus that the recent trouble took place in Durban in 1949.

While in Cape Town I read in the newspapers that in reply to an offer of troops from Australia, the War Office had cabled—"dismounted men preferred". This was the height of futility, corresponding to that of a tallow dog chasing an asbestos cat through Hades, and was so ludicrously contrary to our real requirements against a nation of mounted men, that I wrote to an old school-fellow on the staff of the *Daily Mail* to issue a counter-blast. This was done.

With part of No. 20 Company R.E. as a guard and nucleus of drill instructors, a few of us descended at Stellenbosch siding on Christmas eve, to receive the recruits as they were sent out from Cape Town. I remember our Christmas dinner—eaten in some anxiety, owing to the proximity of a supposedly large number of disaffected Cape Dutchmen—of bully, ration biscuits, and *pâté de foie gras* and plum pudding sent out from home. We ate this in the open, off a rifle box, with our feet in a trench. The light canvas

officers' mess tents, one for each Wing, and the valuable mess plate of enamelled iron, with which Mr. Eckstein had presented the Regiment, were yet to come.

A day or so later the "regiment" began to detrain at the Remount siding, in parties up to fifty in number. It was my province, as adjutant, to receive these newcomers. What surprised me about them was their generally well dressed appearance. Many wore expensive Panama hats, and were correspondingly off-hand in manner. Nearly all were absolutely ignorant of military etiquette or discipline. Amongst the items of local information I had to impart to our "new boys" was the fact that there was a canteen in the camp. "If you have any money," I began—when a prosperous looking recruit broke in in an aggrieved tone, "Whether I have any money or not is my shout, old cock."

Many of these privates had been highly paid, and were in fact much better off than their Regular officers. They were all engaged for a week's trial on both sides. They could continue serving for the full period of their engagement if satisfied, or take their discharge after one week if a military life did not appeal to them. Hardly any did the latter. They were a superior and remarkable, easily controlled set of men. At their respective trades they were first-class, the wages paid on the Rand having attracted good men from all over the world. Each of the three wings had three companies. Each company had a captain and two subalterns. Most of the captains were Regulars or ex-Regulars, whilst the bulk of the subalterns were mine-managers, surveyors, assayers, or men holding responsible posts in the mining industry.

The private's pay was five shillings a day. Once we left Cape Town for up-country, where there were no shops or canteens and nothing upon which the men could spend their pay, Capper decided that part of it should be remitted to the wives of the married men and banked for the bachelors. At first, but only at first, many of the men were extremely suspicious of this arrangement. They could not believe that the colonel, adjutant and others of the regimental staff were not making a good thing out of the pay racket. This idea did not last long. Capper very soon won the respect and confidence of all ranks. As one of the Americans in the regiment remarked, "The Colonel's so upright he nearly falls backwards." Whilst these men and other irregulars got five shillings a day pay, poor old Thomas Atkins, who did the serious fighting, got only his bob a day. It was most unfair ; and our Pioneers felt it. But five shillings was the established pre-war rate for Colonial troops. And that was that.

Within two weeks we were full up, all the officers being either British or American, and the rank and file of many nationalities and all trades. We even had some Greeks, and, curiously enough, two professional embalmers, though of what use they could have been in gold-mining was not obvious. Later on, however, when we were at Norval's Pont on the Orange River, there was a call for their special qualifications. The relatives of a certain senior Regular officer who had died were anxious to have his body embalmed and sent home. The Pioneers were appealed to for help. Our proud boast was that there was nothing we could not do, and our two embalmers were called upon. The first thing they did was to ask for a large amount

of brandy. They got methylated spirit ! The corpse arrived home safely in perfectly good condition !

From Stellenbosch one company went down to camp at Fort Knokke, on the beach outside Cape Town, to collect engineering equipment. This place was rendered almost unbearable by the prevailing "South Easter" wind, which filled eyes, nose and mouth with fine sand. As a proud farewell gesture—and to show itself—the Company made a ceremonial march through the city. The men, though not so young as Tommy Atkins, were a fine looking body, and marched well, and had begun to take a pride in their martial appearance. Many wore beards, and were disgusted to hear themselves described as Boer prisoners.

The whole regiment then entrained for Naauwpoort, one of the two focal junctions in the north of Cape Colony, and the most flyblown dust heap I was ever in. We spent some days there sorting out our heavy constructional gear ; and acquired a regimental slogan. On battalion parade Capper announced that we should no longer have a canteen with us. His high-pitched, penetrating voice rang out over the whole camp : and from the men's tents on all sides, long after "lights out", could be heard his words repeated falsetto—"Pioneahs, there will be no beah heah !" They were never forgotten so long as the regiment existed.

The battalion did not aspire to the ceremonial precision of the Guards, and its drill may not have been good enough for Trooping the Colour. But it could march in military formation, and could shoot. At Naauwpoort our military training came to an end, and our technical work, in which our skilled officers

and men needed no instruction, was about to start. And, though it is half a century ago, I cannot refrain from paying a tribute to the tactful and efficient way our few sergeants and corporals and sappers of No. 20 Company R.E. taught these 1,200 men drill up to battalion drill, and musketry up to 500 yards range, on a range built by ourselves. It was no bunch of raw recruits they had to handle, but tough he-men, mostly older than themselves and financially far better off. They were a credit to their own Corps—the Royal Engineers—and helped to create another fine corps.

I don't know how many of No. 20 Company are still alive, but I salute their memory.

Our work at Naauwpoort took some days. From there the Right and Centre Wings went north to Norval's Pont Bridge, and the Left Wing went northeast, to the Bethulie Bridge across the Orange River, which was the frontier between Cape Colony and the Orange Free State—enemy territory. Then our real work began.

I took one of my Centre Wing companies for its first task, to repair the railway bridge at Oorlogs Poort Spruit in Cape Colony, some few miles south of Norval's Pont. (*Oorlog* is Dutch for war, and was the code word for the mobilization of the Boers.) It was a small job, a couple of 100-foot girders having been destroyed, and did not take long. Meanwhile, the traffic northward, as far as Norval's Pont, proceeded spasmodically over the deviation already built by the R.E. just above water-level. The sequence of operations for the restoration of the railway across the rivers on our way north was to make a deviation down both banks, on the alignment of the original temporary low-level bridge used for the construction of the high-level

bridge, and to rush through a crossing just above water level on timber baulks supported on the old dwarf concrete piers, which had in most cases been left standing. This was in order to get some traffic through as early as possible, and also assist in the restoration of the line at high-level. These hasty crossings were known as "deviations", and were usually carried out by the R.E. construction train. We blessed the old contractors who built this line. Luckily the rivers were dry.

Many of the Pioneers, though recruited in South Africa, had no knowledge of anything outside the big towns, and were quite ignorant about the veld and its flora and fauna. There was an ostrich farm quite close to the bridge, and the ungainly birds were continually wandering round, pecking about like gigantic hens. Taking advantage of this, some of the old hands persuaded one or two of the greenhorns that to get ostrich feathers for nothing one had only to walk up to a bird and pull them out of his tail. One morning, while we were at work, I heard shouts "Get on your belly, you——fool." On looking up I saw a man lying face downwards on the ground some 300 yards away and a gigantic cock ostrich dancing over him in a cloud of dust, pounding the ground with his legs like gigantic flails.

"He'll kill him, Major," shouted the men excitedly. Our arms were piled alongside, and I ordered one of the men to shoot the bird, which he did. It was good marksmanship not to have hit the prone figure. In three minutes, to my surprise, the ostrich was plucked bare and his body buried without trace. We were in Cape Colony, where it was a penal offence to kill an ostrich ! Such was the power of the law—even in war. I got some feathers.

One night, a northward-bound train stuck on the up-grade of the deviation, and word came to the camp that Rudyard Kipling was a passenger. The excitement was surprising, and here on the lonely veld was enacted a scene comparable with that which now-a-days greets the arrival in London of a film star. Practically the whole camp rushed down the deviation to see the man whose songs were on everybody's lips, the author of *Recessional*, the poet who had put Mr. Thomas Atkins on the map. We found him—a small bald-headed man, with big horn-rimmed spectacles, trying to read by the light of a guttering candle. Asked if there was anything we could do for him, he answered "Candles!" And within five minutes he was snowed under with ration candles. Touched by the spontaneous warmth of his reception, he promised to write some tales of the war.

Then with two candles on his window ledge, and cheers and the chorus of *Mandalay* ringing in his ears, the Bard of Empire was carried northwards towards the army in Bloemfontein. He kept his promise and wrote two yarns in a Cape paper, dealing with the war and with the Pioneer Regiment in particular. I have forgotten their titles, but they were not up to his usual standard. Looking back after a long period, during which his genius has been rather under a cloud and his uncompromising patriotism derided by some of our critics and intelligentsia, it is salutary to recall what Kipling did for the Empire and what he meant to Britons the world over at the end of the century. To hear the *Recessional* sung by the troops, with genuine fervour, in the square in Pretoria a few weeks later must have been something unforgettable.

An amusing incident was the unexpected arrival on his way north, of a callow, pink-cheeked, subaltern of the City Imperial Volunteers (C.I.V.s), with a few men escorting a waggon. The spruit happened temporarily to be in flood, and, like good Samaritans, we undertook to show him the way to the nearest ford. It was not until he was safely across, on the north bank, that he divulged that the waggon contained several cases of champagne as a present from dear old London to the officers of its very own regiment. These he hoped to place on rail at Norval's Pont. However, though he was not such a mutt as his nice complexion suggested, he was a perfect little gentleman. It was very good champagne !

It was here that I met my first prisoner of war, brought in by one of our mounted patrols. He was a French aristocrat of the Transvaal Foreign Commando, and according to his own story, was not at all sorry to be captured. He had not appreciated his treatment by the people for whom he was fighting.

During the three weeks we were at Oorlogs our remaining eight companies passed north to the broken bridges over the Orange River, the Right Wing and two companies of the Central Wing to Norval's Pont and the Left Wing to Bethulie.

At Oorlogs we had a comparatively peaceful time. Apart from the rattle of the few supply trains rushing down the deviation, grinding round the sharp curves, slowing across the low bridge, and panting laboriously up the grade on the north, and the noise made by our work, the only sound during daylight was the cheerful whistling of the zakabulas, the cheeky little birds which tumbled about in the sky overhead all day long. All military precautions were taken, though no

outposts were necessary, Gatacre's and Clements's force having driven the Boers north of the Orange River. But while we were busy closing this minor gap in the communications, elsewhere a very important event was under way, in the shape of Roberts's great flank march on Bloemfontein.

All this happened just on fifty years ago, and an outline of the strategic situation at the time may help to explain what lay behind our strenuous efforts on the railway. On assuming command Lord Roberts determined not to repeat the head-on attacks from which we had suffered so much in the past, and not to attempt to drive due north from Cape Colony into the Orange Free State against the defensive position which the Boers were almost bound to hold along the Orange River, the crucial points of which were the great railway bridges at Bethulie and Norval's Pont. His scheme was to mislead the enemy by massing force round Naauwpoort, in Cape Colony, the important strategic junction in the centre; secretly to concentrate the bulk of it westwards on the Cape Town-Kimberley railway; then, cutting adrift from that line, to march due east across country direct on Bloemfontein, or, if the railway crossings at Norval's Pont and Bethulie were intact, to press on in the centre northwards for the Free State capital. In accordance with this plan the clearance of the enemy from the north of Cape Colony and from the Colesberg area was carried out by Generals Gatacre and Clements, who, on reaching the Orange River at Bethulie and Norval's Pont found both high level bridges cut, the latter with five, and the former with three, spans destroyed.

The situation as regards Roberts's rail communications when his cross-country dash for Bloemfontein

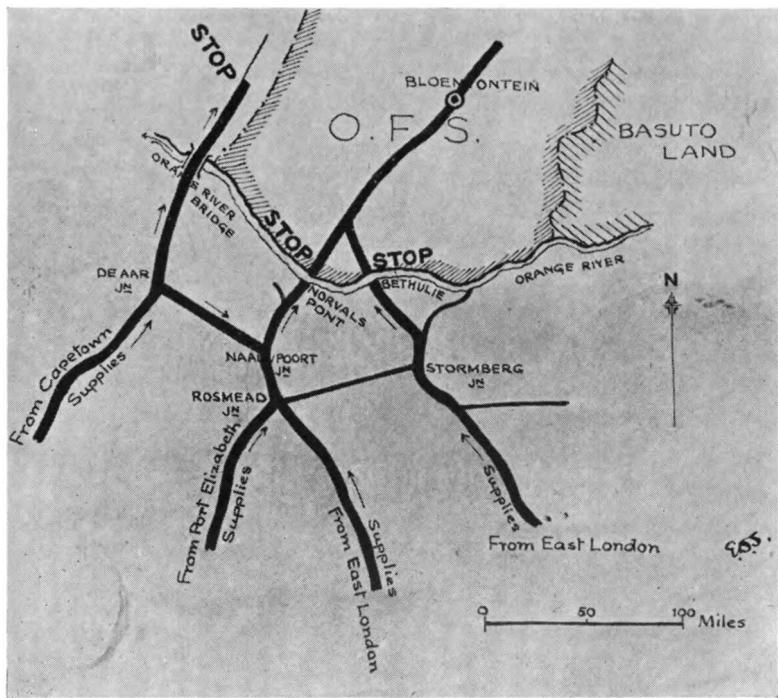


Diagram showing breaks in Lord Roberts's rail communications when his cross-country dash for Bloemfontein started

started, can be seen from the diagram (facing). This shows the "bottle-necks"—the big breaks in the railways—by the word "STOP". What this word meant on the ground can be seen from the picture it presented to our troops (pp. 95 and 110). Owing to the less extensive damage done at Norval's Pont it was decided to concentrate all efforts on restoring full traffic there, and so get at least one bottle-neck removed as soon as possible, and leave the repairs at Bethulie to be carried out later. In neither case could the restoration be done at one stroke. In each it called for a series of steps.

The victory over Cronje at Paardeberg on the 27th February opened the way for Roberts's flank move on Bloemfontein, which started from near Paardeberg on the 7th March—a week before we arrived at Oorlogs Poort. At that point the low-level deviation allowed but a small amount of traffic to pass north, and then only so far as the big block at Norval's Pont, there to swell the "traffic jam" which grew day by day. The packed trucks accumulated on the fan of sidings, hastily thrown down alongside the station on the south bank, were, from the communication point of view, a depressing sight. Their release, by the partial opening of the deviation on the 30th March, was as if a traffic "cop" had waved his hand at a congested point in a city street.

From the 7th March Roberts was out of touch with any railway until the 13th, when he reached Bloemfontein. But though he was then on a main line from the base ports, only a trickle of supplies could pass to him until the 30th. Full uninterrupted communication was not attained until the 20th May, when the H.L. (high-level) bridge was completed and through

traffic once again became what it had been in peace time.

Meanwhile, on the 15th March, Clements threw a pontoon bridge over the Orange some few miles below the Pont. Until it was certain that the Boers were not going to resist on the river, this was a ticklish operation. But so soon as it was known that the enemy had dispersed northwards, all tactical factors were eliminated. The problem of crossing became a purely engineering matter.

Though it was not forced in the face of opposition, this passage of the Orange River in 1900 was a noteworthy feat. It entailed the heaviest bridging operations until then carried out in war, and is of interest in that it illustrated, from the time when two Engineer officers swam the river, to the time when fully laden trains passed without stopping, more than fifty feet above the stream, seven different methods of crossing. Without giving a time-table or any technical description of these, it is sufficient to mention that they were concurrent, and that each was a step forward. They were:—

1. The swimming of the river by individual officers to reconnoitre.
2. The ferrying over at dawn in boats and pontoons of a covering party of infantry, to seize the north bank, if necessary.
3. The building of a floating bridge, 260 yards long, of pontoons and barrel piers, and the passage over it of Clements's force of all arms. It was built at a spot tactically more favourable, in the event of the Boers resisting, than any spot nearer the railway. But it necessitated a detour over sandy tracks on each side, and it was at the mercy of floods.

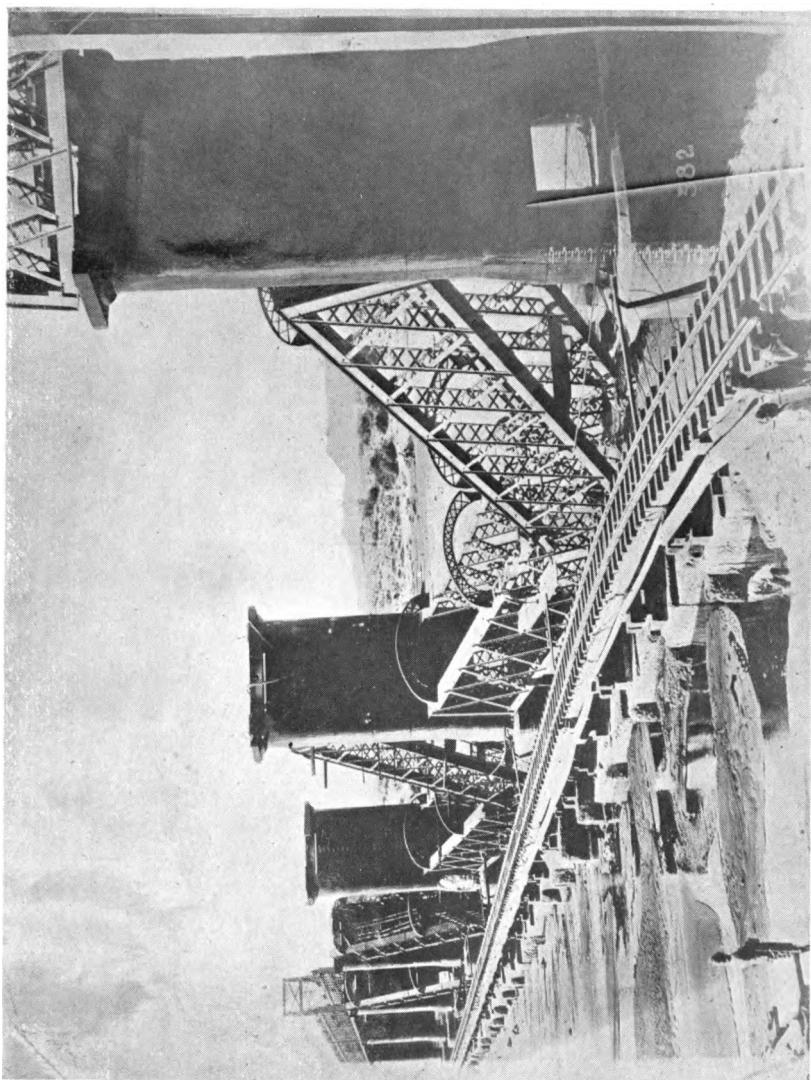
4. The establishment of a "flying-bridge"—a large pontoon working on a steel hawser, close by the broken railway bridge.
5. The erection of an "aerial tram"—a cage carried on two wire cables stretched over timber frames above the alignment of the rail.
6. A low-level railway deviation of stone bank and timber baulks, just above water-level, supported on the concrete blocks originally used for the construction of the bridge.
7. The repair of two shattered iron piers and the replacement of the three destroyed spans by undamaged spans from the north and south ends of the bridge.

After fifty-two days of strenuous labour the rails from north and south were finally joined on the 20th May. It was a great moment when amidst cheers—we had no band—the first through train to Bloemfontein, Union Jack streaming from the engine funnel, proudly puffed across the river. The auspicious occasion was celebrated by a regimental concert, home-brewed harmony being fortified by Cape-brewed beer: we were fortunate in being on the railway. In the officers' mess we guzzled tinned asparagus. Later it was a comfort to us, clearing away the tangled mess in the river bed, to see and hear the daily mail-train rumble overhead. Many staff officers on their way to Army headquarters were on these trains. To most of the heterogeneous troops in South Africa red tabs were at all times like a red rag to a bull; and the sight of these officers peering down—clean, cool and aloof—did not amuse the grubby men fifty feet below, who had been sweating so hard to get stuff to our troops. When Lady Roberts passed across to

join Lord Roberts they expressed their disapproval openly. Trains, full of reinforcements, guns, ammunition and supplies of all sorts, they could understand, but the more subtle reason for contributing to the moral and physical comfort of the man who bore the whole responsibility of conducting the war did not appeal. Though I did not approve of the display of their sentiments, I could sympathise with what lay behind it.

When the deviation had been nearly completed, we received a warning telegram to say there had been rain in Basutoland and that we might expect a spate at Norval's Pont. Since a flood must sweep away a large part of the work we had done, which was only a foot or so above water-level, and so re-open the break in the line, we at once amassed as many loaded trucks as possible on the north bank. Baulks strong enough to bear a truck, though not an engine, were rushed over the last span, and the Pioneers and large parties of infantry worked the whole night, hauling over 129 bogey trucks one by one. Each required 100 to 120 men. The water rose and rose, but only just up to rail level, and did no harm. The situation was saved. When, mud up to the eyes, and fed up to the teeth after having been up all night, I met a dapper Sapper subaltern, who had just arrived on a locomotive from Bloemfontein, his white collar, tie, red tabs, shaven chin and clean uniform were the last straw. I remained an officer but ceased to be a gentleman. Hotspur, in Henry IV, expressed my feelings at this moment:—

"I then, all smarting with my wounds being cold,
To be so pestered with a popinjay,
Out of my grief and my impatience,
Answered neglectingly, I know not what,—
He should or he should not;—for he made me mad
To see him shine so brisk, and smell so sweet, . . ."



Bethulie Bridge and deviation

I put my arms round the subaltern. " You little _____" I said, " apologise for being here all dolled up, or I'll jump into the river and take you with me. I don't mind: I've been in and out all night." He didn't know who I was or what my rank or regiment were. But he apologised quickly—and wisely. Life, even at its nadir, has its compensations ?

During the bridging, work on the south bank went on continuously all round the clock, in eight-hour shifts; and the scene at night was weirdly beautiful. In the shimmering cones of light, shed by the arc lamps above, the rivetters' fires glowed red, and the flames of the improvised acetylene hand-lamps of the men flitted about white and cold, like fire-flies. And all this coruscation was sullenly reflected on the oily surface of " Ole Man River " gurgling below, greedy for anyone who should miss his footing. The height of the bridge above the stream and the streaking past of the water below had a curious mesmeric effect. Some of the men had to sit down and clutch something, either another man or part of the structure. Kipling has well described this effect in his story *Disturber of Traffic*.

On the whole it was found better to work only by daylight. Then the slow movement of the three shore spans, creeping out to their final positions across the gaps in the middle of the bridge, was impressive. Each span was 136 feet long, and each girder weighed 45 tons. I learned many things on the engineering side of this job. One was the way that bulky and heavy weights could be petted and coaxed by men who knew how. It was a revelation of what could be done by a 50-ton hydraulic jack and a few short pieces of greased rail—so long as the weight was under control and did not " take charge ". It reminded me of the saying of

old Archimedes—"Give me a fulcrum and I can move the world."

I was Commandant on the north bank, where I had a couple of companies of militia to hold the kopjes all round, for our men could not do heavy work all day and carry out outpost duty at night. I was always afraid that the Boers might harden their hearts and make a really determined attack and destroy all we had done. It was quite possible at night to have filled a long train of empty trucks coming south with armed men who could have jumped out, either on the H.L. bridge or on the deviation, and seized the whole place. Over and over again I thanked God that no one could fly.¹ If this great gap in the communications had been re-opened, and kept open, when our main army had advanced beyond Pretoria, we should have been awkwardly placed. But, luckily for us, they did not seize their chance.

But, to regress and digress, Lord Roberts did not wait for the completion of the H.L. bridge on the 30th May to press on northwards. Seventeen days before, on the 3rd, he set out for Pretoria, having accumulated sufficient supplies by means of the deviation. For some days after he reached Bloemfontein the most urgent demand had been for medical stores, owing to the terrible outbreak of enteric fever which attacked his troops.

During the last half of April and the first week in May, we gradually moved on to other wrecked bridges on the way north. The Left Wing, having finished its work at Bethulie, went on to the Vet River south of

¹ When the Wright brothers conquered the air it was my recollection of what might have happened at Norval's Pont that prompted me in 1906 to write the story *The Joint in the Harness*.

Kroonstadt. The Right Wing left Norval's Pont for the Zand River, just north of Vet River. The Centre Wing under my command was the last to say goodbye to the Orange River, the scene of our arduous labours. But one company of the Wing—No. 5—under Captain Gale, R.P.R., was given the honour of going ahead of the rest to the next forward job, the repair of the Rhenoster River bridge, at Roodeval, north of Kroonstadt.

To anticipate, it was here, on 7th June, that the Pioneers first met the enemy and suffered disaster, through no fault of theirs. No. 5 Company arrived late in the previous evening at Roodeval, a wayside station, where there was already a small infantry garrison of some of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, guarding a dump of 9.2-inch howitzer ammunition, clothing, and mails. The defences consisted of trucks loaded with lyddite shell and bales of clothing. Some Yeomanry were extended on the veld round as outposts. Next morning, at dawn, De Wet sent in a burgher under a flag of truce threatening that, unless the place were unconditionally surrendered, it would be attacked by 1,000 men and four guns. Surrender was refused. As the enemy emissary cleared the post he dropped his flag, and a field gun opened fire at 800 yards range. The first shell killed Gale and three men and wounded two N.C.O.s of the R.P.R. By noon, though the fire of the defenders had forced the guns to withdraw out of rifle range, five were now bringing a cross fire on the small garrison. As there was no sign of any reinforcements, the garrison surrendered to avoid useless loss.

We, the rest of the Centre Wing, received the news at Norval's Pont, where we were still loading up. It was

a bad blow. Gale—in civil life a mine manager—was a gallant and capable officer, and his company was a very fine one, which had been specially rehearsed, before its departure, in preparing defences whenever it arrived anywhere. In addition to its bridging gear, it had full-sized tools, in the use of which the men were expert.

De Wet carried off or burned the stores, including 1,500 bags of mail, set fire to the ammunition, the station buildings and the deviation bridge, which had been thrown across the Rhenoster River, and departed with his bag of prisoners—infantry, yeomen and pioneers—eastwards towards the Natal border. Before the end of the month the officers and other ranks were separated, and the latter got away into Natal.

Of the two surviving Pioneer officers one—Lieut. Thurston—was an Australian-American and the other—Lieut. Stockett—a hundred per cent American, whose appearance to me always suggested Abe Lincoln. The former got away before the officers and men were separated. The latter thought it his duty not to escape whilst his men were still captive. But so soon as they were free, he cleared out; and in the freezing dawn some few days later, a tall figure, in a striped blanket and tattered hat like a Hottentot Venus, loomed out of the mist before the outposts at Zand River. It was Stockett, who had walked many miles.

When he was captured I had naturally felt it my duty to reassure his relatives that the Boers were not savages, and treated their prisoners well. But to whom and where to send a letter? One arrived for him from the U.S.A., addressed in a lady's handwriting. Query—mother or wife? I tossed up: Heads—mother:

Tails—wife. It came down Heads. The postmark on the envelope was “Mauch Chunk, Pa.” I had never heard of the place. But I wrote to that address, as to a mother. Mauch Chunk is near Hickory Chunk, Pa., in the soft-coal region of Pennsylvania, where the inhabitants had no great opinion of the British or their officers ; and, as Stockett told me afterwards, my ordinary and routine act as a commanding officer changed the whole attitude of the town towards the British Army.

Stockett and I became firm friends. When next we met it was during the Great War in 1915, at dinner at the Hotel Cecil, London. There was a Zeppelin raid towards the end of the meal, and when invited by the leader of the orchestra to select a piece of music, Stockett chose the barcarole from *Les Contes d'Hoffman*, and to this seductive obligato, punctuated by the sullen roar of bombs not far off, we finished our meal. Air raids and bombs were more of a novelty in 1915 than they are now. During 1918 Stockett was employed in the U.S. War Department at Washington, and we met once again at dinner at our Embassy. Like so many of his countrymen during the Boer War, he was a good soldier of the Queen.

A story—unconfirmed—of the action at Roodeval is that a newspaper correspondent somehow found himself with the garrison, and when the fighting began very wisely took cover just below the parapet of the station well. When he saw the flash of a gun he ducked. After the shell burst he popped up and shouted, “Go it, boys. England shall ring with this,” and then ducked again at the next flash. Thurston, between two trucks loaded with lyddite, was the official look-out. He announced the flashes by singing

out "Pahm-pahm"—his way of pronouncing pom-pom. To the end of the war he was known as Pahm-pahm Thurston.

To return to my story, after packing up at Norval's Pont I took the remainder of the Centre Wing to join the Right Wing in repairing the H.L. bridge over the Zand River. The Left Wing had started similar work at the Vet River.

As, at that period, many supply trains travelling north at night, with a "guard" of a few half-frozen men on top of slippery tarpaulins just arrived in the country, had been held up and captured with all they contained, before leaving Norval's Pont I resolved that we should have a fighting chance, if attacked. From the naval dockyard at Simonstown we got up some loopholed bullet-proof plates to fit behind the green sides of the usual goods trucks. On board the train we should have ammunition, food and water and 300 to 400 men all practised in taking action without awaiting orders. Some were to tumble out on one side of the train, some on the other, and lie down well away from the rails. A third party was to shoot from the trucks and so draw the enemy fire, whilst trenches were being dug from which to carry on the fight after daylight. We were very proud of our innocent looking supply train, and hoped it might give a nasty surprise to "Brother Boer". Much to our disappointment, however, we were not attacked either on the way to the Zand River, or later.

Fourteen years later, near Poperinghe in Flanders, I examined one of the naval armoured cars of the late Commander Sampson, R.N., which had just been in action. There was more than one hole right through the bullet-proof plate. My mind went back to our

nice green "supply" train at Norval's Pont. Perhaps we had been more fortunate than we knew in not having been attacked between the Orange River and the Vaal in 1900?

The journey north was uneventful. One little incident—there were others—showed that, gallant and efficient in many ways as were our Irregular officers, they sometimes failed to realize their responsibilities in looking after the troops under their command. Many of them were accustomed to having large numbers of men under them in peace time. But, after the men had done their work, they looked after themselves. In war this was impossible. It was essential for their officers to use their rank and authority—if need be—to ensure that they had what was necessary. During this halt at Bloemfontein no one was allowed to leave the station and stray into the town, for we might go on again at any moment. Most of our officers did look after their men; but just before the train started I found one captain of a company under the seat of his carriage, drunk as a fly. A good fellow and a super-excellent engineer, he had his weakness. He had not seen any liquor for weeks, and had somehow got hold of a bottle of gin.

We reached our destination on the 12th at about 2 a.m., so that all we could do in case of attack was to ascertain the whereabouts of any British troops. We drew up at the little halt called Virginia Siding on the south of the Zand River, close to the wreck of the H.L. bridge, on which our Right Wing had already started work. Until daylight we could do nothing but remain in our train, which was the safest place.

On the 14th the Zand River was the scene of the Regiment's second, and successful, brush with the

enemy. And its success was very largely due to the late Captain Nat Wilson, C.M.G., D.S.O., of the Centre Wing R.P.R. Early on the morning after our arrival Wilson, who had come up ahead and spent the previous day snooping round, confessed to me that he was very uneasy about the position, which was what he called a "Puggy". The whole of the Pioneers—the Right and part of the Centre Wing, which had just come up, were under the command of Major Seymour, in charge of the bridging operations. I was the senior Regular officer present, though still a captain. As a garrison there was also part of a battalion of militia, under a Lieutenant-Colonel, who was, by seniority of rank, in command of the whole post, including a few mounted infantry. These were encamped on the south bank. The Right Wing of the R.P.R. was also encamped on the south bank, a little farther from the river. The Centre Wing was to be on the north bank.

The river ran in a deep depression, thickly covered with thorn bushes, whilst above, the open veld lay gently undulating, almost flat, and quite bare.

Whilst our camp was being pitched, Wilson and I rode round the position. For our constructional work the whole post was conveniently arranged—*if the Boers did not attack*. But if they did, our position would be absolutely hopeless. They could approach at night under cover, up and down the river bed, and at dawn shoot us up in our tents, capture the whole garrison, burn the deviation and as much as had been repaired of the H.L. bridge, and so cut the communications at the Zand River for the second time. I need not elaborate what this might have meant for our army then in Johannesburg and Pretoria.

Wilson, with his Scottish canniness, was right. We discussed matters with Seymour, who admitted his desire to get on with the bridging, but, correctly, left military measures to be taken by me, the professional soldier. We put our views to the Commandant, and suggested that we should leave the camps standing and spend the day in entrenching in the cover of the thorn scrub along the river, and the night standing to arms in the trenches, where we would, for a change, have the enemy at a disadvantage in the open, probably wasting ammunition, shooting into our empty tents. The nights are extremely cold on the High Veld of the Orange Free State, and my proposal of sleeping in the open was not at all welcome. The colonel was inclined to leave things as they were, and loath to make any change. In fact, it was not until I pointed out, firmly but tactfully, that as the senior Regular officer present and a sapper at that, I should in the event of a "regrettable incident", be blamed for any failure in the defensive measures, and asked for his refusal in writing, as Commandant, to adopt my suggestions, that he gave way.

The whole garrison slept that night in the trenches. It was so cold that my water bottle froze solid on my back. There was no attack, though next day we received reports that the Boers were collecting in the vicinity. We spent the day at work on the bridge, in finishing the defences and in pitching our Centre Wing camp on the north bank, which was to be my sector of the defence. That night we again took up our action stations. About 1 a.m. Colonel Capper arrived by train from the south, approved the measures taken and assumed command of the whole place. Next day work went on on the bridge. More reports of the

proximity of a Boer Commando came in, and at night the mounted infantry were sent out to "scout". I felt sorry for these men. They were neither scouts nor horsemen, despite any training they had had, and were in an absolutely strange country. Unless they dismounted and concealed themselves and their horses in whatever cover they could find, they were absolutely "meat" for the wily enemy. But, so far, they had gone out each night and seen nothing of him. So passed the second day.

At dawn on the 14th there was the deep boom of an explosion on the line to the north, and we heard the reports of Mausers as the M.I. scouts came galloping in. I was in a shallow cutting on the north bank, which formed part of our defences. As the M.I. came up to the edge of the cutting one man fell with a scream at my feet, shot through the stomach. The popping of the Mausers then became general all around and was mingled now with the different sound of our rifles as we replied, though we could see nothing. As I crept through the thorn scrub to some of our advanced trenches I came to the conclusion that the Boers were firing explosive bullets which detonated on contact with the scrub. I had had no experience of the crack of the air when bullets pass quite close. The Boers, however, were not using explosive bullets on that occasion, though later we captured some which had been made in Hungary.

The fighting had continued for some time when Seymour, crawling forward on the south bank, to a front post, was shot through the head. And so perished the splendid man who was a leading figure in the gold-mining industry of the Rand and originator of the Railway Pioneer Regiment—a loss to Britain as well

as to America. Another American, Lieutenant Clements, was killed at the same time. Both were fine officers. The death of these two was not known to me till the fighting was over just before noon.

From the north bank the only Boers we saw were a party with a pom-pom sneaking round at very long range to the south, to try to cut the railway. There was one man, obviously the leader, on a white horse with a red blanket over his shoulders. On these, the only visible enemy, we concentrated at 4,000 yards range.

About noon the enemy shooting died down all round, which we could not understand until a train full of reinforcements came puffing down from Kroonstadt on the north, and some horsemen—Yeomanry—appeared over the gentle rise in the south. We then had glimpses of scattered bodies of Boers disappearing to the east and west. We were relieved, though we did not need relief. We had 700 rounds of ammunition per man, a tank truck full of water and our little contractor's engine in the cutting. We were in good concealed defences and were prepared and equipped to go on fighting for a long time. The attack was over, and the post remained uncaptured. The Boers would have done better to concentrate their fire on the relieving train, which was a far better target than the garrison, well entrenched and concealed in the scrub.

After the action we had the time to clear the thorn bush in front of our trenches, and so have a better field of fire. The difficulty was to find the men for this work, since the most important duty for us technical troops was to re-establish communication. Superstition came to our aid. I do not know if it is a common belief in Lancashire, but the Militia lads were very

keen to view the bodies of the Boers whom we had killed, which still lay unburied, and to cut the buttons off their clothes for mascots. Such an uninteresting fatigue as clearing scrub was not popular, so we did a trade. I placed sentries, with a supply of billhooks to keep the morbid militiamen out of sight of the corpses. Any man who wanted a peep was given a billhook and told to clear a given space of scrub. When he had done his task he was allowed to see the dead, but not to touch them. A fine field of fire was obtained; and everyone was happy. If it had become known, it would have caused a scene in Parliament as "another method of barbarism".

At this time, there were in the Kroonstadt area two Generals Knox. One was known as "Nice Knox", the other as "Nasty Knox", which described their popularity. It was one of the two who came to our "relief", but even now discretion forbids me to say which. They must both be dead.

This—one of the series of raids on our communications started by De Wet in June 1900 after our army had reached Pretoria—was carried out by a Commando of some 700–800, with a field gun and a pom-pom. The Boers were reported to have lost 21 killed and 31 wounded, and we had two officers killed and one officer and eleven men wounded. The leader was the Boer general, Roux, then known to us by reputation as the "Fighting Parson". Zand River was a case of the biter being bit. The enemy, judging from other experiences, had expected to surprise us, and was himself surprised. As Boer women had been allowed to come in from the neighbouring farms with eggs and butter, it was not to be wondered at that the raiders knew the position of the camps sufficiently accurately

to plan a deadly attack at a time when the troops would be asleep in their tents. The tents were where expected, but, unluckily for the Boers, the occupants were not in them, but as snugly situated as the attackers themselves.

I was much impressed, while at Zand River, by the independence and common sense of our men when they had to rely on their own judgment. There were several sentries round the camp. We at once dispensed with the established but absurd practice of each sentry shouting out to the next every half hour—"Number one sentry and all is well", "Number two sentry, and all is well", and so giving away their positions to the enemy.

An amusing incident happened, which might have had unpleasant consequences for me. After the H.L. bridge was open, the traffic on the line increased, and all sorts of trains passed northwards, some supply trains, some troop trains. One morning, off one of the former, from under a tarpaulin on a truck, dropped a disreputable figure. He was in very dusty civilian clothes, and had a three days' beard. He looked very like a Boer. I was not very trustful of strange civilians after our fight, and said "Hullo ! Who the devil are you ? "

The answer made me all the more suspicious. "Kuk-kuk-Kingswell". The man stammered, or pretended to, to conceal his English. Curiouser and curioser, I thought, and placed him in a hole in the ground, with a sentry over him. Still stammering, he protested that he was the editor of one of the leading English Johannesburg papers, on his way up to Johannesburg. On my asking if he knew any of our Rand officers who could identify him, he named Nat Wilson.

I left him in his hole in the ground, and sought Wilson. Wilson laughed, and said, "O yes, I know him. He is editor of the Jo'burg Star. He stammers like hell. His name is Kingswell. *He's no Boer spy.*" There was mutual recognition, and the tramp joined us at lunch and drinks at the Centre Wing mess tent. He was not a spiteful man, or I might have been pilloried in his paper as a stupid and reactionary "Imperial Officer" with I don't know what detriment to my military career.

The H.L. bridge was finished within a month, and before the end of July the Pioneers had moved north—the Left Wing from the Vet River to Vereeniging bridge over the Vaal. There were also many smaller bridges and culverts restored by the R.E. Amongst the heavy repairs carried out were those at Rhenoster River and Standerton. The Right and Centre Wings reached Johannesburg at the beginning of August, and the Left Wing came up gradually during the next three months.

At Kroonstadt, on our way north, I was taken aside by the Commandant of the post, and asked that a van, containing many thousands of pounds in cash for the pay of the troops, which had been awaiting safe transit for some days, might be attached to my "spoof" supply train. I strongly suspected that the enemy would get wind of what we had with us and attempt to capture it. He did get the news, but "missed the bus" by two trains, blowing up and capturing the next train but one after ours; and we reached Elandsfontein junction, near Johannesburg, without incident. Here the station staff were surprised by the sudden irruption, from an apparently normal train, of some hundreds of armed men in "smasher" hats, who sang

a verse of *God save the Queen*, gave three cheers, and then quietly climbed back into their trucks. It was a natural outburst of joy at getting back to what, for most of the men, was "Home". In a less direct way it was the same for me, for I discovered that the detachment occupying the junction were my old friends, the 30th East Lancs Regiment, in which I had a cousin, and with whom I had lived in Lucknow in the "nineties". The officers were at dinner in the Refreshment Room, which had been taken over as a Mess. I was wearing a "British warm" coat, with no badges of rank, smasher hat, and had a bandolier and Mauser carbine slung across my back. When I tried to enter, the poor old Tommy sentry at the door was a bit taken aback. "You can't come in 'ere: Officers Mess". He was suspicious when I said I was an officer and passed in. But he was more surprised when I got into the room. Those at table first scowled at the intruder, and then half of them got up and shouted "Why, if it isn't Cousin Ernest." (This was the name I was known by in India.) "What the devil are you doing here, in that get-up?" etc., etc. From Oudh to the Rand is certainly a pretty far cry. The East Lancs were in the brigade holding Johannesburg, commanded by Brigadier-General Wavell, the father of the late Field-Marshal.

On arriving here the rôle of the regiment changed entirely. We became what were called the Johannesburg District Military Police—in reality, the outposts of the gold mines of the Witwatersrand, extending for about 50 miles along the Reef, from Springs on the east to Randfontein on the West. We had posts at many of the mines protected by sandbagged buildings, trenches, barbed wire, land mines and every warlike

device, including a live high-voltage wire. They were in fact more military posts than police stations.

The town of Johannesburg, under our military administration, was divided into six districts, and the "reef" outside was divided into the same number. The police of the former were drawn from the Regular troops of the brigade holding the town, whilst the District Military police consisted of the R.P.R. The whole administration was under the Military Governor, Colonel Colin Mackenzie¹ of the Seaforth Highlanders, and under him was my immediate chief, the Military Commissioner of Police, the late Lieut. General Sir Francis Davies, then a major in the Grenadier Guards. "Joey" Davies was a delightful man to serve under. Burly, bluff and florid, he rode a weight-carrying Basuto pony and carried a Kaffir knobkerry. He always wore a Service cap squarely on his head and well-pulled down on his ears. I was his staff officer for the J.D.M.P., as well as commanding officer of the 1st Battalion R.P.R., and he often came into my office to use my telephone—an instrument with which he was not familiar. "Hullo", he'd shout, and then, louder, "Hullo," finally roaring the word. On still getting no reply, he would say "Damn", and stump from the room. A keen fisherman, he spent much of his leisure in tying flies.

I next met Davies in 1913, when he was Director of Staff Duties at the War Office. The last occasion was in May 1915, when he was commanding the 8th Division in France. I was with him during our disastrous attacks in that month.

Major Capper became a temporary Lieut.-Colonel, and I a temporary Major in command of the 1st Battalion R.P.R. Capper was much away from

¹ Now Major-General Sir Colin Mackenzie.

Johannesburg, at this period and during 1901, raising three more battalions of the Railway Pioneers, who had won a name for themselves. We old stagers of the 1st Battalion, who had been formed so very far back as the beginning of the year, regarded ourselves as the veteran Regulars, the other three battalions being the Militia. There is nothing like tradition and *esprit de corps* ! The 2nd Battalion was commanded by the late Major J. F. Fisher, R.A., from the 1st Battalion; the 3rd by the late Major Wilkinson of the Leicesters; and the 4th by Major Howard of the Rifle Brigade. These three battalions were not employed in police work. They were used for various military duties outside the Rand. Fisher was killed in November 1901, when defending a crossing of the Vaal near Vereeniging. He was a cadet with me at the "Shop", and a splendid leader. All four battalions were commanded by Colonel Capper.

Luckily, the whole of my battalion knew the Reef and the mines well, and it did not take us long to occupy our posts, with the town military police composed of Regulars inside the town limits. All the officers were appointed Justices of the Peace. It was a mixed and rather delicate job of a dual nature for all of us. We were officially, and actually, still at war with a cunning and enterprising enemy; and so long as this state of things continued, the military side of our duties seemed the more important. During the long period until peace was signed, at the end of May 1902, the character of our work changed with the fluctuating prospects of an early cessation of hostilities and with the progress of the measures taken in anticipation of the settlement of the country.

At first, up to the departure for home of Lord Roberts, the official view was that the war was over when the main Boer army had been driven across Komati Poort into Portuguese territory in September 1900 and Oom Paul Kruger and his entourage had fled to Europe. This view was entirely erroneous, and was due to wishful thinking and ignorance on the part of the Government at home—and of Roberts himself—of the nature of the Boers and of their determination to continue the struggle. As their intention became clear, the policy of trying to bring about their surrender by means of conciliatory proclamations and promises (now known as “appeasement”), which had been started as soon as the army had entered the Free State in February, gradually stiffened.

The first time we Pioneers came in contact with this policy of magnanimity was at the Zand River a few days after our fight, when a staff officer came down from Kroonstadt, with a whole roll of posters and hand-bills for distribution amongst the adjacent farms. The idea that they would have any effect evoked sceptical derision amongst those of our men who knew the Boers.

After we had settled down to our new duties along the Rand, the general conviction was, that in spite of his victorious strategy and success in the military sense, Roberts had no idea of the true situation and temper of the enemy. And it really came as a relief when he sailed for home at the end of November and left the conduct of the campaign in the hands of Kitchener, who was regarded as being more realistic and ruthless.

When it was realized that the enemy, though beaten, was continuing the struggle in another form, there was a dual problem facing us. His resistance, which, in the

shape of guerrilla war, flared up and spread through the Transvaal, the Orange River Colony and right into Cape Colony, had to be overcome. But it had to be borne in mind that, while striving for the defeat of the enemy in the field, the two annexed countries would be parts of the British Empire. Much of the immensely complicated task of "resettlement" had to be thought out and prepared for before the formal end of the war.

Ensconced as we were on the Rand, the recrudescence of fighting, which went on for a year and ten months, affected the Pioneers only indirectly. The enemy did not make any serious attack on Jo'burg or the mines, though it was always possible that he might do so. As police, we were more troubled by the influx of repatriated refugees, which was soon permitted because it was essential to get the gold mining industry—economically the mainspring of the life of the Transvaal—started once again. The large numbers of people now allowed to come up to the Rand, whether for the mining or other industries, in addition to the "neutral" foreigners who had never left, immensely increased the pass and civil side of our work; and, whilst the nature of the administration was gradually transformed from war to peace, the executive duties of the Military Police, especially at points farthest out from the centre, became more complicated. I remember that one officer, exasperated by the dual nature of our duties, suggested that we should hand in our rifles and be armed with pillows and scent squirts. As he put it, "If we don't stop a fighting burgher, who has hidden his rifle and tries to get into the town for supplies, we are liable to be tried under military law for neglect of duty. If we shoot him, and his rifle is

not found, we are liable for trial under civil law for manslaughter." It was in truth a delicate matter, the main difficulty being due to the fact that, as the Boer on commando wore no uniform, it was impossible to distinguish between him and his peacefully inclined surrendered brother. The usual reasons for attempts to get into any town were to obtain food or transport, mules or information.

The extraordinary characteristic of the Boers, of never being taken by surprise, was shewn on one occasion, when for some reason—I don't remember what—a small party of us surrounded a bungalow on the outskirts of the town and surprised the occupant in bed at two in the morning. When I entered the room where he lay asleep, with my revolver in my hand and an armed man on each side of me with a lantern and fixed bayonet, he did not lose his presence of mind. He merely yawned, and said in an unperturbed propitiatory tone—"Hullo, old man!" Acting on information usually false, our police stations carried out many fruitless raids.

Nevertheless, there was considerable traffic in and out of the town. Mules were in special request; and in regard to these I had my first meeting with Lionel Curtis, the well-known authority on municipal and international matters and founder of the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London. In Johannesburg there was no drainage system, the night soil being carried at night in iron carts to the sewage farm some way outside the town. The carts were drawn by mules and driven by Kaffirs. The Boers started ambushing these convoys outside the town, shooting the Kaffirs and driving off the mules. This came within my province. I was discussing the matter with the acting-

Mayor of Johannesburg, Major O'Meara, a brother sapper, when a private of the C.I.V. entered the room with some papers.

He stood for a while behind us two majors studying the map, then leant over and blandly explained in hierophantic tones how the operation should be carried out. He was quite wrong; but that did not deter him from expressing his opinion. After my experiences with my own Irregulars, nothing surprised me; and I did not resent the unasked advice of a strange private of another corps. When he left the room I asked the Mayor who he was.

"A man called Curtis."

"But what is he?"

"A private in the C.I.V., an expert in municipal government and town administration, and acting Town Clerk."

"Where does he come from?"

"Oxford."

"Ah!"

To me, in my then state of ignorance of the University, the explanation was sufficient. That was in 1900. A quarter of a century later, when I became a Fellow of All Souls College, I discovered among my colleagues, Lionel Curtis, ex-private of the C.I.V. in the Boer war, and my erstwhile mentor in tactics. Many a laugh we have had over our first meeting. He still maintains that had we followed his advice, which we have both forgotten, we should have had a great success.

An exception to the freedom from enemy attempts against the mines or the town itself, occurred one night in 1901, at the electric-power installation at Brakpan in the East Rand, twenty-five miles away. About 10 p.m., the officer in command rang me up in Johannesburg

to say that the post was being attacked. Indeed I could hear the shooting on the telephone; but I could do nothing. Suddenly there was a grunt and the telephone was silent. After a moment a hoarse voice continued, "I am shot through the stomach. But we—are—all right." Then again silence. It was exasperating to feel that I was in no danger, whilst my men miles away were under fire. The Boers, however, were beaten off, and the officer recovered.

An important fact was that the enemy's attempts on the mines were only half-hearted. If there were signs of serious resistance the attack petered out. The last thing the Boers wished was to damage permanently the source of the wealth of the country—the goose that laid the golden eggs—or to get killed in the attempt to do so. We had placed large dynamite charges in our entanglements on the tailings. These were frequently fired by thunder storms, which advertised their existence. This acted as a deterrent to the enemy, who was extremely suspicious.

The great day in Boer history was the 16th December, 1837, Dingaan's Day, the anniversary of the battle when the Zulu chief, Dingaan, was defeated with great slaughter and driven from his capital. This had been celebrated ever since as a day of national rejoicing. In December 1880, the Republic had been formally proclaimed at Paardekraal near Krugersdorp. Here was a stone memorial, with an arched opening at its base, in which lay a heap of large stones. The story was that in 1880 these had been brought up and deposited by individual burghers, who each took an oath never to surrender the country so long as a stone remained. This being so, it was decided to remove them and secretly scatter them. We were ordered to

do this, as we had a post near by. It was a simple matter to load the stones on to railway trucks. But not so easy to ensure that they would not be replaced, and again become a rallying point for resistance.

That day Major Fisher, still completing the repairs of the Vereeniging bridge across the Vaal, was puzzled to receive a wire from me containing the cryptic words, "Puttur nali men dalao." They did not make sense until he read them aloud several times over. It then dawned on him—he had served in India—that they were euphonically spelt Hindustani for "Throw stones into river." When the trucks arrived the message became clear. They were hauled on to the H.L. bridge and their contents tipped into the stream. I never heard that the Boers discovered what had happened to them. So far as I know, they still rest at the bottom of the Vaal.

The Railway Pioneer Regiment was not originally a mounted unit, the H.Q. staff alone being issued with remounts and drawing forage. But as soon as we became police, the need for some mounted men was apparent; and though we had no horses on our "establishment", it was remarkable how soon we picked some up. For these we drew saddles, bridles, blankets and picketing gear, and formed several small mounted detachments for patrolling. We went all horsey. And it was a pleasing sight to see our expert carpenters, riggers, engine-drivers, etc., cavorting over the veld. Many of the men had ridden before, and all could shoot. It reminded me of the name given by the army to the Mounted Detachments R.E.—"The Galloping Gas Fitters". We were doing a useful job. And no questions were asked. Though we were not Regulars, we were far less irregular than most of the

mounted regiments raised as the war dragged on. This does not apply to the Imperial Light Horse, a *corps d'élite*.

We suffered a good deal at this period from unsympathetic queries from Army Headquarters, where we came under the aegis of the A.A.G. Colonial Forces, who happened to be a very conscientious and zealous officer of the old type, to whom our informal ways were anathema. His invariable comment on any new action on our part was—"This is highly irregular". To our explanation that the R.P.R. was an Irregular Force there was no answer. It was really remarkable how, after nearly three years of war and the creation of many Irregular units, there should still have been a tendency to refer back to regulations formulated years before, which did not meet the current conditions.

My own mount at the end of the war was a big dappled grey—rather a rocking-horse to look at and a clumsy beast. His predecessor had been a delightful little Basuto mare, very fast and as clever as a sword-dancer in dodging the meercat holes in the veld. She was killed by throwing up her head after being allowed to drink from a bucket under a tap outside her stable. She was a darling and her death was a great loss. My very first mount issued to me at Stellenbosch had been a stocky, but slow, Argentine mare. She was shot during the fight at Zand River, though she was tethered in the railway cutting. In Johannesburg I had a Cape-cart and a pair of sturdy mares with great rounded shiny quarters, who were very fast trotters. One was, from her shape, called "Oat Sack". The other was "Voet sak" which is the Kaffir equivalent for "get out". I am not a great linguist, but most of us know the

words for "get out" and "your health" in about a dozen languages. The O.C. of one of my posts was the proud possessor of a Cape-cart and a team of four mules, which I found great difficulty in "tooling".

During my two years in Jo'burg the Stock Exchange woke up and once more grew busy. It became, as of old, a Mecca for speculators. Part of my duties as a J.P. was to grant passes of many types to the returning civilians, British, Boer and foreign, and it was amusing to note the number of "market tips" I received from applicants for passes. I realized that in this world one gets nothing for nothing, and damned little for sixpence, and was sufficiently shrewd to resist the temptation to grow rich quick. As an official I could not be under an obligation. The whole place pulsated with the ups and downs of the share-market. Beyond the large number of people doing a real job of work in the mining industry and in the commercial life of the ordinary business of a big city, there were large numbers of persons of all nationalities, who would now be called "spivs", trying to make a living by speculating. With the gradual increase of the civil population these grew in number.

Johannesburg was no lawless mining camp, in the sense of the old mining camps in America and Australia. It was quite orderly and law-abiding. But it had a hectic, unpleasant atmosphere in which a large proportion of the inhabitants had no roots in the place, but were "get-rich-quick" sojourners, who would return to their own countries when they had made their pile. There were two very good clubs, of which one—the Rand Club—hospitably made all Imperial officers honorary members. There were many houses—fine in a bizarre style—which had been built shortly

before the war, certainly at great cost. But though expensively furnished, the furniture and equipment were obviously new, from Wardour Street or Tottenham Court Road.

As an example, five of us officers stationed in the town rented a house from a well-known and reputedly rich market operator, since dead. It was a large, two-storeyed red brick villa. In it was a billiards room panelled in mustard-coloured satin in machine-carved walnut framework. In the ceiling were sixty-four electric lights which could be switched on in groups of four; and in one corner stood a powerful mechanical organ which played when a "tikky" was put in the slot. A tikky was a threepenny bit, and was the smallest coin current: there were no such things as pennies. In the sumptuous smoking-room there were four or five deep armchairs upholstered in mustard-coloured leather, and a piano on which one of us murdered Liszt's Rhapsody No. 2. I am ashamed to confess that I used to write to my wife "from the trenches, Johannesburg", and received a stream of woollen under-clothing and Balaclava helmets, which I passed on.

During the summer of 1901 I made a trip into Natal to obtain recruits for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions of the Regiment, which, apart from their names, had nothing to do with railway work. It was bitterly cold weather, and there were icicles some three or four feet long hanging down from the roof of Park Station, Johannesburg. The tedious journey, with occasional long halts, was enlivened by the undisciplined conduct of some odds and ends of the Colonial Mounted Corps going south, and the behaviour of a certain young Boer commandant, a prisoner of war who had just been

captured and was on his way to prison at Newcastle in Natal, under the guard of a subaltern of the Welch Regiment.

Was the captive dejected? He was not! By profession a lawyer, he talked English well, and was so garrulous and bumptious that he kept us amused. He started by giving us his story of the fight in which he had been captured. I saw from the rising choler of the three British officers, who shared our first-class compartment, that they had taken part in this action, and were itching to contradict this "Tartarin" of the back veld. But I wanted our glib "brother" to say his piece, and did not wish to spoil the story. So I winked to them to let the commandant run on. He took more than full advantage of our courtesy, sharing our frugal meal and whisky. Then it was the turn of our officers, who contraverted almost everything he had said. But the result was disappointing. The captive was no whit abashed by being given the lie direct, and continued as cheerily as before.

We arrived at Newcastle late at night. There was no escort at the station for the prisoner, and the prison was some way off. I decided that we should stay on the train, which was "tying up" for the night. The Commandant, who heard this, had his own breezy solution. There were, including him, five of us in our compartment, and only four seats. His proposal was that we should toss for the seats. I thought it time to show the "iron hand". "Not much," I said. "You are a prisoner. We'll take the four seats. You'll take the floor. We all have loaded revolvers. Any monkey business, and we shoot. All four of us can't miss you at five-foot range—see?" He saw, and never moved until an escort came to fetch him in the morning, when

he went off, still smiling. The subaltern in charge was a nice young fellow recently out from England. As he departed with his prisoner he thanked me for my intervention. However brave he may have been, in guile he was no match for his captive. He was too much of a "pukka" sahib to treat him except as a sort of guest or pet. After two years of war I had lost some of my natural courtesy.

It has often struck me during the trouble in Palestine that our youthful and partially trained young officers and men did not have a dog's chance against the Arabs, natural fighters, or the Jewish terrorists and thugs trained in the latest weapons (many our own), fanatical and utterly unscrupulous. I don't know what orders our troops in Palestine received; but their anomalous situation recalls that of the Johannesburg Military Police for some months at the beginning of the century.

Three days in the steamy heat of Durban, which reminded me of Bombay, and then back to the icicles of the Transvaal.

Sir Alfred Milner came up to Johannesburg at intervals. I had certain personal dealings with him, and found him very quick in the uptake and sympathetic. On one occasion I wanted his support and financial backing for certain Secret Service work. He listened, and without haggling authorized the sum I asked. He inspired confidence, and I always felt encouraged after talking to him.

And so slowly the end drew near. During the protracted negotiations at Vereeniging and Pretoria, though we knew that peace must be close, we relaxed none of our military precautions. With a mobile and fluid enemy, such as the Boers, we could not afford to

do so. As I have said, they did not want to blow up or destroy the mines. But there were elements in the population which would, for their own ends, have welcomed anarchy and a weakening of the government. A mining centre, where there is promise of great and sudden wealth, naturally attracts a large cosmopolitan population and many undesirables. For some time we heard reports of an "Italian Commando" lying up on the south of the reef, but it never put in an appearance.

Peace was signed on Saturday the 31st May. Of course, the news could not be conveyed at once to the thousands of men of both sides scattered over so large an area as the theatre of war, and fighting continued for some days in the outlying districts.

On the Sunday morning I had gone out on patrol round my posts north of the city, carrying my Mauser carbine and full bandolier for many miles. On return about noon I passed the English Church just as the congregation was coming out, to the strains of the organ playing a voluntary, and got the official news that peace had been signed. My reaction to the glad tidings shows how one's deeper feelings may be warped by petty personal considerations. All that I felt, and said, was "Well; I'm damned!" The larger aspect of the cessation, at last, of nearly three years of stupendous human effort and mutual slaughter was wiped out by my annoyance at having wasted three hours in unnecessary strained watchfulness in the sun and dust. Everything suddenly became flat.

I felt much the same sixteen years later on the more momentous occasion of the Armistice on the 11th November, 1918. I was speaking to the workers in a large ordnance factory in Coventry, when there was a

prolonged wail from the hooter. The machines stopped gradually, and the whirr of wheels died down. It was peace. I did not finish my carefully prepared exhortation. We all looked at each other blankly, in bewilderment, if not with disappointment. It was an anti-climax. On all faces was the question of, "Where do we go to now?" The motive of our feverish activity had gone. I was reminded of that sunny Sunday morning in South Africa of which I am now writing.

I can't recall any jubilation in Johannesburg. Tension relaxed and things were again in a transition stage, with the engines reversed. Arms and equipment were handed in ; buildings and offices handed over; and for some weeks we were all very busy "closing the shop". Officers and men took their discharge. The goodbyes were sad. I don't suppose that many of the officers who served under Capper and myself are still alive. Of the majors, Seymour was killed on June 14th, 1900, Goodwin died in 1946, as did Nat Wilson, our saviour at the Zand River. Fisher was killed in 1901, Wilkinson died after the war.

Johannesburg ceased to function as the headquarters of the Regiment, which, in common with those of most of the other Irregulars, was transferred to the base at Cape Town for final adjustment of all accounts, etc. The rather sad obsequies had to be carried out by myself, the Paymaster and the Quarter-master. We expected a possible wrangle at the Base Headquarters before we were granted clearance to leave South Africa. Our pay and equipment records had been very well kept and the authorities were surprisingly broad-minded and sensible, and raised no unreasonable obstacles. And most of the original R.E.

N.C.O.s and sappers, who had formed the training nucleus at Stellenbosch over two-and-a-half years earlier, embarked for home with me on the *Galician* at the beginning of August 1902.

I was still a temporary major, and much to the annoyance of certain officers in the ship insisted on keeping my "crowns" till I stepped ashore at Southampton. There I was awaited by my wife. We returned, with a detachment of R.E.s, to Chatham, where we were met by the Corps band, who marched up to barracks under me, once more a captain. The crowds which welcomed us in the streets were not exuberant. It was August, 1902; the people had seen too many returning heroes; and the novelty had worn off. Three years of my life had passed. I was at home again, hale and hearty. I was grateful for my good fortune. My moral gain from the campaign was some varied experience: my material loot, some ostrich feathers.

CHAPTER IV

HOME AGAIN

My appointment at Chatham had long since lapsed, and in the autumn of 1902 I was posted a staff captain under the Inspector General of Fortifications, then head of the R.E., at the Horse Guards. I was in the Design Branch of the section responsible for the construction of the barracks under the Broderick scheme for the reorganization of the Army in army corps. This meant a daily journey from Woking, where I now lived, up to London, and occupied me from 1903 to 1907.

In the summer of 1904, the late Lord Tullibardine, afterwards Duke of Atholl, who was Commander of the Scottish Horse up at Blair Atholl, was looking for an officer to train the Pioneer squadron of the Regiment during the annual camp. He wanted a Sapper who had been an instructor in the subject and who had had experience with irregular troops. I filled the bill; and he applied for me by name. That is where he made a tactical error. The then Adjutant-General R.E. at the War Office was rather a tartar of the old school, who naturally did not see why I should be sent all the way up to Perthshire for a month, and did not approve of my being applied for by name. The selection of a suitable officer was his province. The wily Tullibardine appreciated the type of man he was dealing with and did not press my claims. He said—“ Of course, Sir, I don’t want to interfere with Swinton’s London Season ”. “ London Season ? ” “ London Season ? ” “ What has Swinton to do with



Eric Kennington's study of the author, now hanging in the
Royal Tank Regiment's Officers' Club, London

London Seasons ? He shall go at once ! ” I got my orders and had a delightful month’s holiday.

On passing through Edinburgh I reported, as in duty bound, to the G.O.C.-in-C. Scottish Command—the late Sir Charles Tucker—famed throughout the whole army as “——old Tucker”, on account of his lurid language. He greeted me. “Well, Captain Swinton, the last time you——Sappers from Chatham built a bridge for me the d——d thing broke.” My reply was, “ All right, sir, if my bridges for the Scottish Horse break you can call me a——sapper from Chatham.” I took care that none did break.

In camp at Blair Atholl I heard for the first time *reveillé* on the pipes. It was “ Hey Johnnie Cope ” every morning, a gay tune. And I was interested to find that the Duke had a small force of his own retainers known as the Atholl Highlanders. It was a relic of feudalism. After dinner in the mess marquee and in the castle, one’s head was almost blown off one’s shoulders by the pipers marching round the table. I had never visited the Highlands before: and I was interested to find that none of the officers were known by their surname alone. Everyone was——of—— As plain “ Swinton ” I carried no weight until I proclaimed that I was “ of that ilk ” and so established myself.

At the final day’s demonstration parade, a social event at which there were several lady guests, a gun-cotton charge placed in a tree misfired, and it was my duty as instructor to draw the charge, for fear of future accidents. With my heart in my mouth I bravely crawled to the tree—not knowing if the thing might not blow my head off. When I approached the grand-stand, heart filled with pride, hands full of thorns, and

uniform covered in mud, I was not soothed by a young lady spectator sweetly cooing, "But why were you so dreadfully slow in going up to that tree, Captain Swinton?"

It was glorious country, and I enjoyed the work in the open, a welcome change from blueprints, drawing boards and files. I had a squadron of picked men, keepers and gillies, some of them from the Western Isles who spoke only Gaelic, and who were reported never to have seen a train before. Nevertheless we managed to understand each other. I was personally conducted to the very choice spots on the river to get a "fush". But the water was too low, and I never got a rise.

In 1903, I published a tactical brochure on defence based on my experiences in South Africa, and incorporating most of the elementary mistakes which were so often responsible for our regrettable incidents. Called *The Defence of Duffer's Drift*, by Backsight-Forethought, it was read by the whole Army and became an unofficial text book used by most infantry units. One reason for its success was the picture of the hero drawn by myself. Another was the fact that his initials were "B. F.". There were suggestions that it should be reprinted and issued as an official text book. But it was regarded as too flippant and irregular. Nonetheless nearly 50,000 copies were sold. It was printed in the U.S.A., translated into Urdu for the use of the Indian Army, and into Spanish for the Chilean Army. And in 1944—over forty years after its first appearance—the War Office awoke to the fact that it might be of some value, and ordered 3,000 copies for a free issue to the troops. It then went out of print. But it did me a good turn in its first years

of existence, for largely owing to it I was, in 1907, offered the post of Chief Instructor in Fortification and Geometrical Drawing at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. It was a major's appointment; I had just reached my majority—pukka this time; and I accepted the post. But *Duffer's Drift* had not yet ended its career, for only last year the late Field-Marshal Earl Wavell wrote to ask me where copies of it could be obtained as he wished to send some out to his Regiment in Germany for the use of the young officers. Encouraged by his kind words, I decided to bring out a new edition, for which he was good enough to write a Foreword: so the Duffer is still going strong.

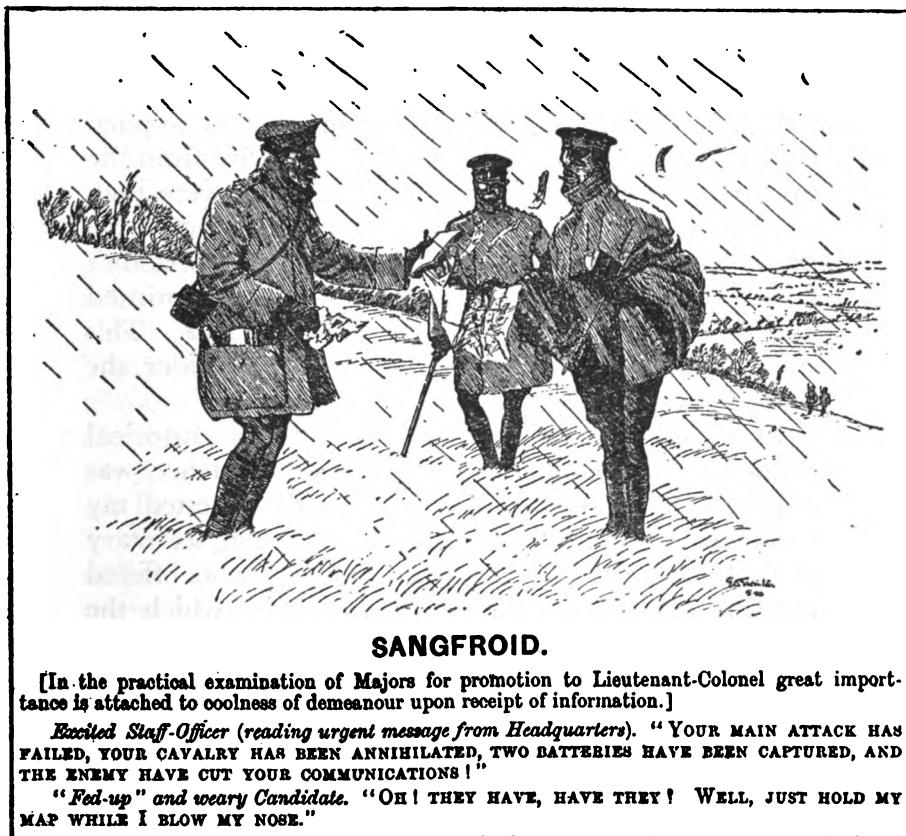
It was pleasant to return to the old "Shop"—a khaki, and no longer blue and gold "Shop"—nineteen years after I had left it in 1888, as a commissioned officer and with the blessing of Lord Wolseley. I remember that his farewell advice rather surprised us cadets by its tone, which was entirely concerned with "getting on". Even at that early age we were not impressed by its underlying motive. It was pure Samuel Smiles. "Gentlemen, if you want to get on, see active service."

In spite of the years that had elapsed and the experiences of the South African War, the "Shop" had changed not at all outwardly, except for its apparel, and very little inwardly. All of the staff had had recent war experience.

I took the opportunity, while I was at the R.M.A., of passing what was called the "tactical fitness" examination for promotion to Lieut.-Colonel. This was not solely a written examination. It included fighting an action on the ground with a mixed force of all arms. My battle took place in a sleet storm near

Fingering Hoe on the Essex coast. The scene—my drawing and my letterpress—was duly immortalized in *Punch*. I also took advantage of the long summer leave in 1910 to go to Heidelberg to refresh my German, but had to cut my stay short, owing to the illness of my wife and small son. I saw a little of the German troops and was much impressed. They were smart, and appeared to be in hard condition. Even then they made me think !

I was for the second time to profit by my writing—which calls for a word of explanation. About 1904 I had been deeply disturbed by our slowness in adopting quick-firing field artillery in which the French had long led the world with their celebrated “75s”. To me it appeared that the advantage conferred by Q.F. artillery was so overwhelming as to put out of business any artillery armed with the old slow-firing guns, however “smart” and efficient it might be. The Royal Military Tournament and the displays of our incomparable R.H.A. confirmed my views. The Tournament was an impressive spectacle, the result of much time, money and trouble. The sight of the splendid men and horses, and their skill, of the polished guns and equipment and whole “turn out” was an inspiration. But it was a *show*. It was not war. I dreaded to think of what would be the outcome of an encounter between our highly trained long-service gunners with the old type equipment, and a less smart conscript artillery having more modern armament. I was also so much impressed by the writings of a friend, the late Major Holmes Wilson, R.F.A., who incessantly urged the necessity for the re-armament of our field artillery, that I wrote a story round the subject. But before I could submit it for publication it lost its



SANGFROID.

[In the practical examination of Majors for promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel great importance is attached to coolness of demeanour upon receipt of information.]

Excited Staff-Officer (reading urgent message from Headquarters). "YOUR MAIN ATTACK HAS FAILED, YOUR CAVALRY HAS BEEN ANNIHILATED, TWO BATTERIES HAVE BEEN CAPTURED, AND THE ENEMY HAVE CUT YOUR COMMUNICATIONS!"

"*Fed-up* and weary Candidate. "OH! THEY HAVE, HAVE THEY! WELL, JUST HOLD MY MAP WHILE I BLOW MY NOSE."

"Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of PUNCH"

point. The War Office decided that we were to have quick-firing guns. I put my MS. away.

Some time later I met Buffalo Bill—the late Colonel Cody—who was in England demonstrating his man-lifting kites. These were the very things for observation of artillery fire from above ground, for which our measures were elementary. A large part of what I had written as to the necessity for Q.F. artillery applied equally to the need for observation of its fire from the third dimension, i.e. from the air. There were then no such things as aeroplanes: and it occurred to me that what was needed could be supplied by Cody's kites. I reshaped my story to this end. It was printed in 1907 in Blackwood's Magazine as *The Kite*. This story with others was published in 1909 under the title of *The Green Curve*.

In 1910, when a new secretary of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence was required, the late Mr. W. Blackwood suggested my name to Admiral Sir Charles Otley, then secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence, who offered me the post. I accepted. The work on which the Section was employed was the official Naval and Military History of the Russo-Japanese War, which, so far as the land operations were concerned, had been carried on up to the end of the battle of Liaoyang. I took over from Colonel Neil Malcolm, and had under me Major Guy Dawnay of the Coldstream, the late Major Daniel, R.M.A., a Russian scholar, for the naval work, and Captain F. E. Whitton of the Leinsters. The naval part of the history was carried out by the late Sir Henry Newbolt, the eminent poet and naval historian. Among the many translators who worked for me was Captain Wavell of the Black Watch, later

Field-Marshal, an interpreter in Russian. We clicked and began a friendship which lasted for forty years.

The following year I was fortunate in having two trips abroad. First in June, the Foreign Office, happening to be short of regular King's Messengers, gave me the chance of "carrying the bag" to St. Petersburg and back. As I had never been to Russia I jumped at this opportunity. At the Foreign Office I picked up two bags, the smaller one of which was a "crossed" bag containing the more secret documents. I had the normal passport but not the official King's Messenger's greyhound badge, of which I have never seen an example. A compartment on the train and a cabin on the boat at Harwich were reserved for me. The journey of the Messengers to and fro was obviously a routine matter. The railway and ship's officials seemed to be expecting me and were helpful. I took my responsibility seriously and kept my eye strictly on my bags. I was therefore all the more surprised when I drove up to the Chancellory of the British Embassy in Berlin early next morning, to be met by the Embassy porter—a German—called, I think, Heinrich, who was waiting to take delivery of my bags. No one else was about, and it was with considerable hesitation that I handed over my precious charges and went on to the hotel, wondering why it was thought necessary to employ commissioned officers to travel first-class all the way from London and back to convey despatches which, on arrival, were entrusted to the hands of a German underling. We are a curious people!

From Berlin I started that night for St. Petersburg, which I reached the following afternoon. On changing trains at Wirballen on the frontier I was surprised

by the sumptuous nature of the hot luncheon awaiting us at the station restaurant.

The Russian carriages were impressively high and broad but very gloomy, and the train lumbered along slowly. We passed through or alongside several huge forests of coniferous trees, and late in the afternoon reached the capital, where I found an omnibus from the Embassy awaiting me. A room had been reserved for me at the Hotel de France, not far from the Winter Palace—an old-fashioned ultra-respectable plush settee-ed and mirrored hostel, which was the routine port of call for the King's Messengers. The big, modern, smart caravanserai was the Hotel de l'Europe not far off, with its *zakuske* (*hors d'œuvres*) buffet, one hundred feet long. The snacks were so nice at all these Russian meals that one was tempted to fill up on them. I had to wait about a week before the return bags were ready and amused myself by exploring the city. What struck me most was the immense width of its streets, though the huge buildings seemed rather dilapidated.

I found the diplomatic staff in Berlin, and other Embassies, most charming but slightly patronising and superior. As I then had over twenty years service I did not appreciate the condescension of some of these youths who would have been subalterns in the Army, and I let them know it. The regular King's Messengers were, I believe, almost all retired Service officers, and the impression I got was that the young members of the diplomatic were inclined to "high-hat" them.

On the journey back to Berlin three amusing fellow-travellers boarded the train at Wilna. They were two Belgians and one Dutchman, all in the electrical engineering business, and they all spoke French,

German and English. They had been having a happy business trip to Russia which they compared favourably with Germany. Our conversation gave me an insight into the very real fear of Germany entertained even in 1911 by all the lesser (?) countries.

One traveller, however, stood up for the incorruptibility of the Germans, and bet another a bottle of real French champagne—none of your Seckt—that the German Customs officer at the frontier would not take a tip. Sometime about midnight, as we sped westwards across East Prussia, there was a knock at my door and the winner of the bet invited me to join the party to celebrate his success. Being in bed, I refused, but not wishing to appear the proverbial churlish Briton, I relented. I carefully locked the door of my compartment and joined the three good companions in their coupé three doors off. We cracked a bottle of very good wine, and then of course had the "other half". As I sat quaffing champagne in my loudly striped pyjama suit on the Berlin express I could not help speculating on the reaction of the Foreign Office to this picture of the King's Messenger carrying secret despatches. I was by the open door next the corridor, and watched my own door. Our Embassy got its bags all right.

When I got back to England we were in the midst of the great coal and railway strikes; the French Army was unhappily situated as regards heavy artillery and equipment and the Kiel Canal had just been completed. Involuntarily I felt what an opportunity it was for the Germans—if they meant trouble. As things were, our internal communications and mobilization arrangements must be paralysed and our naval activities hamstrung. Though on general principles

I was greatly perturbed, I found when I reported at the Foreign Office no apparent alarm at the potential situation, though the railway bridges and tunnels in the south of England were being guarded by police posts. It was a sweltering hot summer, and my brother, home on leave from India, took out in his car some of the reliefs of the wretched police, in their heavy uniforms, to their posts. It was from them that we got most of our information.

As we know, the Germans were not ready, and nothing happened then. And on the 21st July, Lloyd George made his warning speech at the Mansion House Banquet. The tension temporarily, and at least superficially, relaxed.

Later, at the instigation, I believe, of Prince Henry of Prussia, an Anglo-German motor tour was arranged between fifty car-owning members of the Royal Automobile Club in London and a corresponding number of the Imperial Motor Club in Berlin. As was carefully explained to us by another English-speaking German Prince taking part in the tour, it was not a race but a friendly reliability trial. It was no doubt initiated in an attempt to promote an *entente* between Germany and this country, the relations between whom had been steadily deteriorating. If this were really the case, Prince Heinrich's effort failed of its object. Close association for about three weeks did not increase our liking for the Germans nor theirs for us. Each British car had a German naval or military officer as "observer", for umpire, and there was a reciprocal arrangement for the German cars. I took part as official observer on a German car. The senior German *Unparteiischer* was Prince Henry himself. The senior Briton was the late General Sir James Grierson, who

died in France at the commencement of the first World War.

And yet, though it seemed to many of us British that the whole tour was a piece of bogus appeasement on the part of the Kaiser's Government, quite a number believed in the genuineness of the gesture. Curiously enough among these was the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who was a member of the British party. He and I were discussing this matter on the morning of the 9th July on the deck of the Nord Deutscher Lloyd liner *Grosse Kürfurst* as we steamed up Spithead, when the news of the arrival of the *Panther* at Agadir came aboard. Conan Doyle turned to me: "Yes, it does look fishy, I admit", was his reply to my unasked query—"but personally I don't think you are right". Well, in 1914 he learned the truth.

CHAPTER V

TANKS AGAIN

MY military career covered a period of thirty-two years, by far the most important of which were those concerned with my part in the origin of the Tank, for this weapon inaugurated an entirely new form of warfare. The full story of its creation can be found in my book *Eyewitness* published in 1932.¹

Here I tell of the grim impression made on me at my first visit to the Front in September, 1914, by the devastating German use of the machine gun and the havoc it was causing among our troops : of my determination to find a counter to it and of my conviction that an agricultural machine called the Holt Caterpillar Tractor could be adapted to a kind of armoured gun-bearing vehicle for this purpose. I described the frustration, lack of co-operation and vision which I encountered among high-up officials and how my scheme finally came to fruition through the prescience of Mr. Winston Churchill, who allotted £70,000 of Admiralty money for a purely military weapon, thus enabling the necessary experiments and trials to be carried out. I told of the premature use in small numbers, despite my protests, of the new weapon in an effort to stem the holocaust of the Somme battle, in which it signally failed, thereby mercifully discounting the giving-away of the secret we had so carefully guarded.

I went on to tell of its success when properly used for the first time at the Battle of Cambrai, though it

¹ Hodder & Stoughton.

was not followed up owing to the lack of foresight of those in command to exploit it; nevertheless, this battle had definitely established the Tank as a new arm of warfare.

From then on I faded out of the picture until in the autumn of 1934, just twenty years after I had initiated them, I renewed my official connection with the Tanks when I was appointed one of three Colonels-Commandant of the Royal Tank Corps. That I had never lost interest in my ewe lamb goes without saying, but it was a solace and a satisfaction to be once more in a position actively to work for the Corps, and I was much touched by the welcome I received from many whom I had known in the early days of the new Arm.

In my civilian capacity I had been careful not to bring myself forward in any way in regard to the Tanks, but with my new status I now had an opportunity of visiting Tank headquarters at Bovington and was intrigued to see streets and barrack blocks bearing my name. I was, too, particularly struck by the keenness, smartness and *esprit de corps* shown by all ranks. That Corps had established itself. The competition of the cadets at Sandhurst for commissions in the Tanks was gratifying and showed an appreciation of the role of mechanized warfare in the future. This confidence was unluckily not shared by the leaders of the Army.

As Colonel-Commandant I found I had a diversity of duties to perform. I went up to Catterick to induct the new Tank Battalion which had just been re-formed ; and I christened an engine " Royal Tank Corps " for the L.M.S.R., and had the devil's own job to break the bottle of champagne—before luncheon I may add !

During my period of office I had the opportunity of meeting the leading Tank officials of the day and learning from them of progress to date. Thus I made the acquaintance, which has since ripened into friendship, of that live wire Major-General Sir Percy Hobart, whose energy and powers of organization are well known. From 1933–1937 he was Inspector of the Royal Tank Corps at the War Office. About the same period he formed and commanded the First Tank Brigade. This was the first peace-time Tank formation and it introduced revolutionary ideas in tank control and tactics. These, however, when demonstrated, were not acceptable to the powers of the day, but the Germans were quick to seize on them, and acknowledged then and later that they were put into practice in Poland in 1939 and in Western Europe in 1940. During the Munich crisis Hobart was flown out to Egypt to raise a mobile division as best he could from the troops on the spot for the defence of that country. This was the origin of the Seventh Armoured Division, generally known as the Desert Rats—of which General Hobart was Desert Rat No. 1.

In the early days of the War he raised the 11th Armoured Division in the United Kingdom, and in 1942 the 79th Armoured Division. In the spring of 1943 this was converted to a new specialized armoured role for assault on *Festung Europa*. It gradually evolved its own organization, equipment and training. These included swimming self-propelled tanks, for assault on the beaches ; mine-sowing and mine-removing tanks; flame-throwing tanks; different forms of bridge-laying tanks and tanks carrying devices for crossing all kinds of obstacles, such as ditches,

sea-walls, marshes, quicksands, etc.; amphibious armed troop-carriers, and eventually armoured infantry-carriers.

The 79th Division was a large one and never operated all together, but suitable combinations of its establishment were allotted to Army, Corps, or even Divisional Commanders, for practically every operation of any size, and they usually formed the spearhead of the assault. At the time of the D-Day landing¹ the 79th comprised three brigades; at the time of the Rhine crossing five brigades, one of which was an assault R.E. Brigade.

All this was a far cry from "Mother"—the very first tank of all. Yet early in the last war a member of the Army Council described the Tank Corps in an official minute as "luxury units". I will suppress his name.

The Tank Corps is now part of the Royal Armoured Corps, which to-day includes most of the old cavalry regiments. The 1914–1918 war spelled the doom of the cavalry as such, and it was merely a matter of time before it became mechanized. The process began in the middle 1920's when the 11th Hussars and 12th Lancers were converted to Armoured Car units. Some ten years later the conversion of the remainder was begun, and the operation was greatly speeded up in 1937 and 1938.

His Majesty the King has honoured the Royal Armoured Corps by becoming its Colonel-in-Chief. Major-General Sir Percy Hobart is Representative Colonel-Commandant of the Royal Tank Regiment Component.

One of my duties was to present young Tank Corps officers to the King. During my tenure I attended for

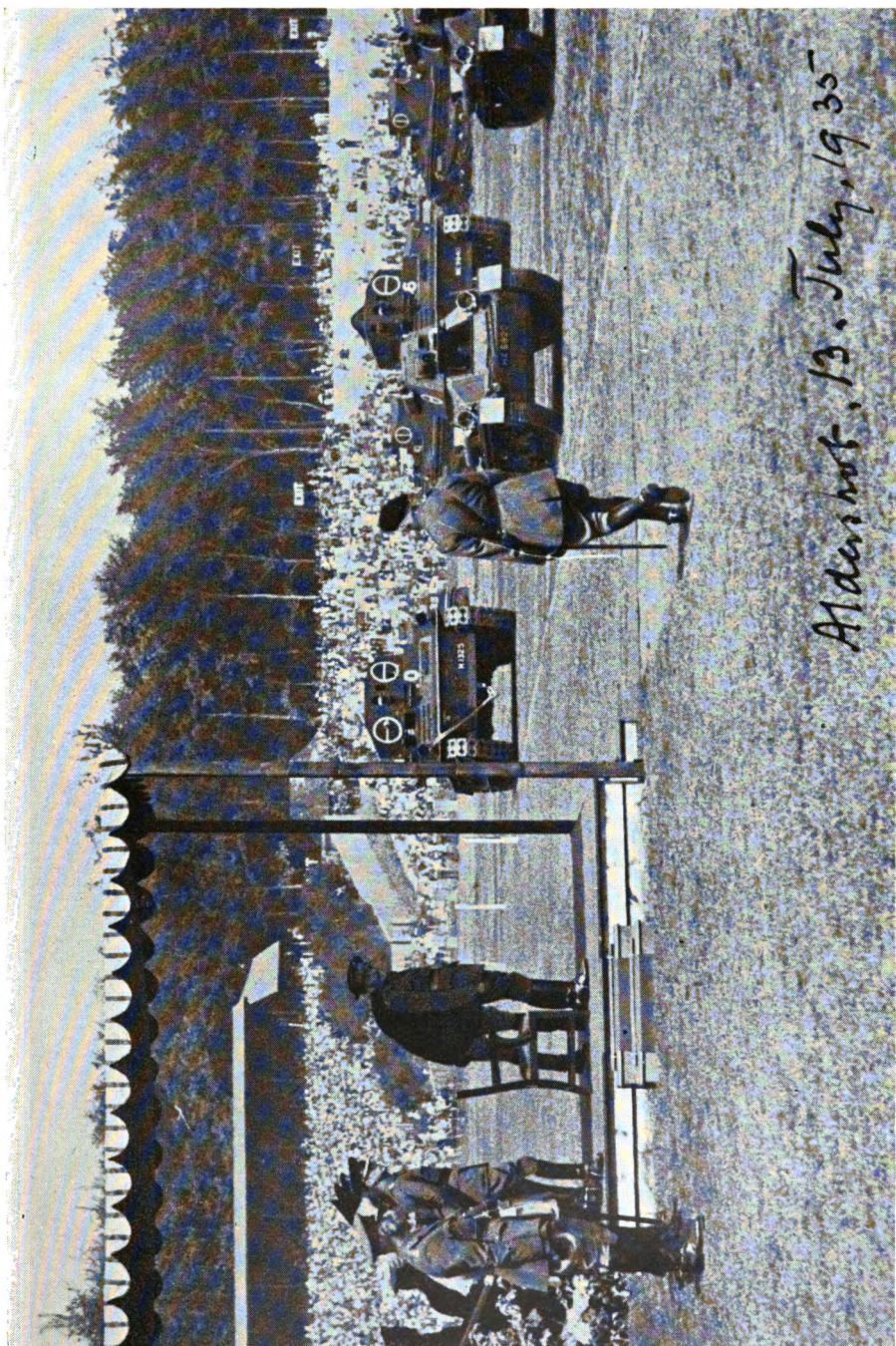
¹ June 6th, 1944.

this purpose the Levées of three sovereigns; one of the last held by King George V; and the first held by King Edward VIII and King George VI respectively. I particularly remember on one occasion that an attractive red-haired young officer—one Jim Richardson, whom I called Copper Knob; son of Brigadier Alec Richardson of the Corps—lost his card twenty minutes before the ceremony was to commence. “Well, my boy,” I told him, “you can’t get in without a ticket. It’s up to you.” I don’t know how he got it, but Copper Knob was there. To my grief he was killed in the World War.

I spent a week-end with Archie Wavell on Salisbury Plain, when I first met the then Secretary-of-State for War, Mr. Hore-Belisha, whose reign at the War Office was currently known as “The Feast of the Passover” from the number of dismissals he made. I remember, after a long and dirty motor drive, finding ready a nice hot bath into which I gratefully sank, and discovering afterwards that it was Mr. Secretary’s that I had pinched. Later he got back at me. “Swinton,” he said, “how did you ever become a Fellow of All Souls?” “Why, Mr. Secretary,” I replied, “don’t you know? It’s because I’m so damned good-looking.”

It was my duty and pleasure to preside at the annual Tank Corps Dinner, which usually took place on the anniversary of the Battle of Cambrai. On one occasion I had as guests of honour Mr. Winston Churchill and Lord Nuffield. The latter was new to this kind of function and possibly a little shy, and his main preoccupation seemed to be to catch his train back to Oxford that night. When I suggested that he might spend the night in London he confessed that he

Admiral, 13. July, 1935



The author, when Colonel-Commandant, approaching the dais after leading the Tanks past the King at the Royal Review. His Majesty's four sons are seen standing behind him

had not got a toothbrush. That, I told him, was simple as he could afford to buy up all the toothbrushes in the metropolis. He stayed—and what is more, he made a speech—and a good one. In those days it was a novelty for him.

I was lucky in that my period of office covered the Silver Jubilee of King George V, and I had the proud privilege of leading the Tanks past him at the Royal Review at Aldershot. The roars of applause as the monsters crashed by was very warming to the cockles. I shall not soon forget the sight of the King with his four sons lined up behind him on the royal dais—possibly the last time they were all together.

Six months later I had the melancholy duty of representing the Corps in the funeral procession of the King. Such crowds had never before been seen in London, and I had the utmost difficulty in reaching my place. As we neared Paddington station the crowd broke the cordon and the procession was momentarily held up. It was a nation's farewell to one whose simple goodness had won its love.

I.—The Awakening of a Giant

“**A**RL aboard,” intones George, the Negro porter of the Pullman car. The cry is repeated along the train; the passengers scramble in; and the little wooden steps are picked up. A discordant shriek from the locomotive, and its wheels begin to revolve to the slow puffs whose roar drowns that of the steam blowing off impatiently. She is off ! The pace gradually quickens. Faster and faster the cars glide by, until the last recedes into the distance down the shimmering tracks. The immense train is under way; but so long as it is in sight it has not attained full speed.

This everyday scene was frequently witnessed by me during the Great War, when on two visits to the States after the Americans had come in. It was symbolic.

A colossus in size, of untried and incalculable potential strength, Uncle Sam had at last awaked and begun to move his limbs. The signal had been given throughout the land from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Canada to Mexico; and the Train of State had started in earnest. But by August, 1918, when my opportunity for personal observation ceased, it had nowhere near attained its full momentum, nor had it done so by the time that the “Cease Fire” sounded round the world.

For two months of 1917 and seven of 1918—far away from the Western Front or Whitehall—I was privileged to be something more than a deeply interested spectator of this awakening.

One of my boyhood's cherished wishes had been to visit the United States. This had been intensified by the fact that I served during the whole of the South African War in a force which owed its origin to the foresight and pertinacity of an American, and that several American citizens, both as officers and men, served under me. But it did not appear likely that I should ever see the country which I had always associated with Red Indians, scalps and mustangs, the land of Washington, Bret Harte, and Uncle Remus. It was, therefore, with the pleasure of anticipation that in September, 1917, I accepted an invitation to join the staff of Lord Reading, when he was sent out to the United States as Special Envoy. And it was with the pleasure born of realization that I again accompanied him in February of the following year, when he was appointed British High Commissioner and Special Ambassador at Washington. The first visit lasted from September to November, 1917, the second from February to August, 1918. America had crossed the Rubicon some time earlier, but my two sojourns in the country coincided with a most critical period in her history and in that of the world. They were to me an unforgettable experience.

Rufus Isaacs, the son of humble Jewish parents, became an extremely successful barrister and was destined to hold the highest offices—Lord Chief Justice, British Ambassador to Washington, Viceroy of India, finally finishing up as a marquis. He was an enigma to many people and played a lone hand, few indeed becoming his intimates.

There was much speculation as to how he would fare in Washington. At that time the Jews were not *personae gratae* in the United States and were debarred

from many of the best clubs. But Reading's good looks and charm of manner smoothed the way, and he carried all before him.

The voyage to New York in 1917 in the old American liner *St. Louis* was slow, and eventful only in so far as we were held up by fog in the Mersey, and for fear of submarines had to zig-zag a course round the north of Ireland. A large portion of the time of our party on board was absorbed by lengthy daily conferences on subjects which the new envoy was to take up on his arrival. Lady Reading was with her husband, to whom she was an inspiration. Though an invalid, she was very much alive to all that went on. She was a very charming and gracious lady. It was delightful to witness the mutual devotion of Reading and his wife.

One of our party was that remarkable genius Maynard Keynes, later Lord Keynes, who was lent to Lord Reading by the Treasury, to be at hand when matters of international finance were on the *tapis*. I took notes at our daily conferences, though I was often out of my depth. Indian silver, I remember, was one vexed question. To me Keynes was in many ways a puzzle. The first night out, when we were fog-bound in the Mersey, he spent a considerable time with me up on deck, trying to convince me that discipline was not necessary, even in the army. For a mathematician and economist he was casual and vague. He all but missed the special train which took us to Liverpool, and even when not seasick he could not get up in the morning.

There also were Brigadier-General McLachlan (Mc. Goo) our newly appointed Military Attaché at Washington and his Assistant Attaché, Lieut.-Colonel

the Hon. Arthur Murray, M.P. The latter was the younger brother of the Master of Elibank, the Chief Liberal Whip, and so knew everyone who mattered and called many of them by their Christian names. Reading, to me the Lord Chief Justice, was to him "Rufus". They were old parliamentary friends.

We also had on board Lieut.-Colonel Sir William Wiseman, the Head of the British Secret Service, U.S.A., and his Assistant, Lieut-Colonel Norman Thwaites. I had never heard of either of these officers before; and it was some time before I could place them: the former I never placed until long afterwards. He was a mysterious person. He had become a great friend of the renowned Colonel House, President Wilson's confidential adviser, and through him of President Wilson, and he was on intimate terms with the two men. Both before America came into the war, and afterwards, Wiseman did invaluable work. It was of a secret nature and, so far as I know, no complete account of it has ever been disclosed. He was a most important factor in Anglo-American relations. Both countries owed much to him. Thwaites ably assisted him on the counter-espionage side of his far-reaching diplomatic and political activities.

Much as I had heard about the marvellous sight presented by New York to those arriving by sea, I was not disappointed. I had also the good luck later to see the city at dawn from a room high up in the Plaza Hotel. As the sun rose, the skyscrapers—some, monolithic blocks of white masonry, others, graceful and delicate as steeples—stood out in the clear morning air, pearly grey on one side and rosy pink on the other. It was in truth a fairy city.

The harbour itself was a scene of intense activity, with its numerous tugboats fussing about in every direction like water-beetles, and long ferry-barges carrying whole trains of red freight-cars.

Our party was conveyed straight to the New Jersey shore, where a special train for Washington awaited us. I now for the first time made the acquaintance of an observation car, in which I spent most of my journey. What impressed me most in the landscape as it slid past was its general untidiness compared with the trim country-side of England; and the number of small wooden houses dotted about haphazard accentuated this. The incessant hooting of the locomotive at the many grade-crossings and the mournful tolling of its bell as we passed through towns were nerve-racking. In spite of the luxury in which we travelled, the journey was noisier and dustier than railway travelling in England.

We reached Washington after dark. The capital, with its fine public buildings, monuments, and geometrical planning, was a new conception of a city, and the brilliant illumination of the streets was a striking contrast to the gloom of those at home.

My recollections of the first seven weeks I spent in America are somewhat blurred. Lord Reading was at work all day and until late into the night. As his only staff officer and general "bottle-washer", or what the sailors call a "dog's body", I was kept busy taking notes, telephoning, telegraphing, ciphering and deciphering cables, arranging for conferences, meetings, dinners, and every kind of engagement, almost all of which were official and concerned with the war. Part of my duty lay in fending off unnecessary visitors

likely to waste the time of my Chief, interviewing Pressmen, photographers, and others who were employed in the great game of publicity. The unscrupulous manner in which all sorts of people endeavoured without justification to take up his time was surprising. The telephone became a curse, though it was responsible for some amusing contretemps. On one occasion, when I was trying to ring up the French Ambassador, a shrill female voice answered: "Say, why haven't you sent up that pound of raw steak? Send it up right now." My curiosity was aroused. I replied: "Very good, madam. But what for?" "What for?" she squealed. "For my baby, of course." This was a stammerer—something new—American babies fed on raw meat! "See here—" the irate lady continued, but I cut her short: "Are you the French Ambassador?"

Some anxiety was felt by the American State Department lest any attempt should be made, by enemy agents, against Lord Reading's life, owing to the vital importance to the cause of the Allies of the matters in which he was engaged. A tame detective was therefore "assigned" to us. He was an ultra stream-lined guy. He always chewed gum or smoked a dry cigar, and, I believe, "packed a gun" somewhere on his person. I also kept a loaded revolver in the drawer of my table in the ante-room of Lord Reading's office.

Our stay in Washington was broken by a short visit to Government House, Ottawa, to confer with the Governor-General, the Duke of Devonshire. I cannot say that I saw much of Canada, for I was so busy that I got out of my office for only one hour a day. We travelled to Ottawa direct from New York, and returned to Washington via Toronto and Buffalo,

crossing the border at Niagara. It was a fine day, and the sun was shining through the water curling over the lip of the Falls. I disgraced myself in the eyes of Lady Reading by comparing this moving emerald wall to six feet of *crème de menthe frappée*—a vulgar but accurate comparison. Whilst in Ottawa I had an opportunity of seeing Lord Reading in action, in negotiation, when he met a body of hard-faced Canadians to discuss the subject of Canadian wheat. Within two hours he had converted them all to his view. He was indeed an advocate capable of charming the birds off the trees.

It would be both impossible and tedious to give a list, from the President downwards, of the people seen by Lord Reading, most of whom I also met. After our own Ambassador—Sir Cecil Spring-Rice—the member of the *Corps Diplomatique* whom I came to know the best, was the late M. Jusserand, the French Ambassador, who always addressed me as “*Général Tank*”. His knowledge of English and of English literature, on which he was a great authority, was astonishing. The Belgian Ambassador, the late Baron Cartier de Marchienne and I started a friendship which continued till his death in 1948. During the Second World War he always tried to persuade me to keep goats in my garden. He was a very clever diplomat *de carrière*. Among the various important officials I met there was one “unofficial”—Colonel House—the superman of mystery, who was, so everyone whispered, “closer to” President Wilson than anyone else: in fact, an *éminence grise*. House was a most charming person. He always walked about soft-footed and spoke “off the record” in a whisper; and when I addressed him as “Colonel”, he confessed to me that

he had no right to that title. I renewed my acquaintance with Lord Northcliffe, whom I had last seen, in his dressing gown, two years earlier in Paris. This amazing man was at the height of his powers, with a vitality and driving force something akin to that of Napoleon—to whom he fancied he had a great resemblance. Not only was he the head of all the many British missions in the United States, but he was controlling at home, with Lord Beaverbrook, the propaganda department against the enemy, which was carrying on on a large scale the work started by me on a small scale in October 1914. The reference to his resemblance to Napoleon brings to my mind a bad turn I unwittingly did to a member of his staff—an old school-fellow of mine. This man had been lunching with me at the Junior United Service Club, where at that time there was a heroic bust of Napoleon on a granite pedestal half-way up the main staircase. The forehead had the usual lock of hair spread across it, and on the pedestal was a gilt "N" in a laurel wreath, and a number of gilt bees.

My friend, with a journalist's curiosity, asked who it was. The lock of hair and large "N" caught my eye, and on the impulse I said "Northcliffe. See the 'N'?" Impressed, he said, "But what are the bees for?" "Why, to show what a busy bloke he is." My guest, on returning to Carmelite House, proclaimed his discovery. He never heard the last of this episode. He lost face. And I lost a friend!

Lord Northcliffe was very friendly to me; and I saw a good deal of him in Washington. I was particularly struck by the friendliness and charm of the Assistant Secretary to the Navy, of whom I should have liked to see more than I did. He appealed to me—to

all of us. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, for it was he, was a tall handsome young man before he was stricken down by infantile paralysis. But his courage and determination equalled his looks and enabled him twenty years later to become the hope of a distracted world.

I, bearing a message from Reading, also had an amusing interview with T. P. O'Connor. I tracked him to his lair, high up in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel—I think it was. The bell boy opened the lift door and ushered me into a room with parapets of papers breast high, behind which in a sort of haze of snuff was Tay Pay. As soon as I could make myself understood for sneezing I gave my message. Tay Pay was most kind and courteous. But I continued to sneeze till the elevator arrived at the ground floor.

My seven weeks in the U.S.A. passed like an exciting dream, with little time for thought. The voyage home in November—in the old *St. Paul*—was taken up by conferences. On board were Lord Northcliffe, and Sir Thomas Catto, now Lord Catto, late of the Bank of England, also the late Mr. Tom Lamont of Morgan Grenfell's, the munificent benefactor in 1947 of Canterbury Cathedral. On the voyage he was also my benefactor, giving me a box of fabulous cigars. Our return to London was a plunge back into wartime conditions, which were a grim contrast to those under which we had recently been living. Almost immediately after our arrival Mr. Lloyd George gave a breakfast at 10 Downing Street which was attended by Lord Reading, the leading American representatives in England, and myself. On completion of my work with Reading, I resumed my old place in the Cabinet Secretariat in

Whitehall Gardens. And so ended my first crusade to God's Own Country.

My visit there had opened up to me a new vista. It had brought me into touch with a diversity of personalities and interests. I had met many types—members of the Administration, high officials, prominent financiers, heads of great business organizations, notables of every kind. I had been brought to appreciate the significance of "size" and "pep". But I had not yet met the President, nor the great American people face to face.

* * * * *

When I reached home again on the 11th November, 1917, it was to find on all sides an atmosphere of depression. The failure of the French offensive on the Chemin des Dames—the great attack from which Nivelle expected so much—the defection of Russia, Passchendaele, with its grisly tale of slaughter, the air raids in the South of England, and finally, the recent Italian *débâcle* at Caporetto, had exerted their cumulative effect. Privation, no less than grief and anxiety, accounted for the wan faces to be seen on every side. Though means had been found to cope with the U-boats, the ill-nourished population was still suffering from the influence of their depredations, and was less resilient than it had been. Three years of prolonged strain seemed to have brought the end of the struggle no nearer.

As I drove down the dimly lit Old Kent Road to my home in Blackheath, in the murky drizzle of that evening, the full grimness of the situation was borne in on me. I contrasted what I saw with the material well-being and buoyant optimism of the country I had

just left, which as yet had tasted none of the sufferings of war. Glad as I was to be back, my home-coming was not in all ways a joyous one. It was a plunge from the midst of ignorance, mass exaltation and enthusiasm into the sombre gloom of stark reality. Beneath the pervading depression there lay a fixed determination to see it out and to finish the thing once and for all, whatever the cost. But hope long-deferred sorely needed some heartening.

For me there followed a period at the Cabinet Secretariat, part of my time being taken up by liaison duties between the War Cabinet and the newly formed Supreme War Council then being started at Versailles, to which I had a direct telephone line.

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Half-way through the month I chanced to meet Lieut.-Colonel Bradley, my former second-in-command of the Heavy Section, who was still serving in France. He confided to me that the Tank Corps, whose continued existence had been in jeopardy, had been given a fresh lease of life, and that at the urgent instance of the Corps Headquarters a great push was under preparation on the plan I had outlined over a year and a half previously. It was to be a surprise Tank attack on a large scale without any preliminary tell-tale bombardment. My feelings on hearing this news were mixed. It recalled to me vividly my early efforts to bring about such employment of the New Arm. For a year I had been unable to keep in close touch with those commanding it. But I was aware that they continuously pressed for its use in a more enlightened manner than had hitherto been favoured. Yet my experience caused me to wonder whether even

now—in spite of the lessons of fourteen months—it would be rightly employed, and, if so, whether measures would be taken to reap the advantage gained. Of the Tank Corps itself I had no doubts.

On the afternoon of the 20th I was at work when Hankey rang up and asked me to look in and see him. Maurice Hankey is not an emotional or excitable man; but when I entered his room he burst out with the news that a great offensive had been carried out that morning at Cambrai; that it had been a surprise attack by some 400 Tanks; that we had advanced to a depth of from 8,000 to 10,000 yards on a 12,000-yard front, capturing about 8,000 prisoners and 100 guns, with practically no loss. Greatly elated, he added that he would have my memorandum of January, 1916, reprinted and a copy sent to each member of the War Cabinet. (I don't believe that this was ever done.)

I rejoiced at this news. At last our terrible enemies—the German machine gun and barbed wire—were beaten! But my transports were restrained. I was looking ahead—trying to appreciate the actual situation. My face must have betrayed my thoughts, for Hankey continued:

“What's the matter? You don't seem too pleased.”

“I'm pleased all right,” I answered, “but I'm wondering. I bet that G.H.Q. are just as much surprised by our success as the Boche is, and are quite unready to exploit it.”

This was The Afternoon of the First Day of the First Battle of Cambrai. Of what had actually happened I then knew no more than I had just been told. I was backing form. History has shown how correctly.

Dubious as I might have been about the future, I was overjoyed that at last the New Arm had had a chance to prove itself and had achieved such immediate and overwhelming success. I telegraphed my congratulations to Elles, then Brigadier-General, and to the Tank Corps, which he had had the privilege of leading into action. His reply:

All Ranks thank you. Your show, Elles

is one of my cherished possessions. But over and above all that it meant to me, the message did honour to its author, who, in his hour of triumph, was big enough to share his laurels.

On the morning of the 21st November, 1917, the joy-bells of the City of London rang out for the first and only time during the Great War. This was a measure rather of the emotional strain under which the nation was labouring and of the hunger for some positive success, than of the actual extent of the victory gained.

That our jubilation was short-lived was not due to the Tanks, which had more than vindicated the claims of those responsible for them. The cause was to be found largely in the disbelief of G.H.Q. in the New Arm and the consequent unreadiness and failure to seize the opportunity created by its use. This was followed by the surprise counter-attack of the enemy ten days later, which should not have taken us unawares.

The above few paragraphs have been reprinted from my book *Eyewitness*, published in 1932. They have no direct connection with my visits to America; but form a part of my personal story at an important period.

* . * * *

Before the end of the year Lord Reading, who had been created an earl for his services, was appointed Special Ambassador to the United States in place of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice. He called on me and asked me to accompany him. When I objected that I did not wish again to act in an A.D.C. or *bonne à tout faire* capacity, he explained that he did not mean that I should, but wished me to be the senior member of his Staff. He added that he had tried to get me a "K" for my previous service under him, but as I had gone out neither directly under Foreign Office nor War Office auspices I could not be included in the "Honours" list of either, being neither flesh, fowl nor good red herring. I replied that I certainly did not deserve a knighthood for the two months' work I had done for him, though I might deserve it from the Army for what I had done in connection with the Tanks. I pointed out that it was not possible for me to be his second-in-command unless I were given temporary rank senior to the Military Attaché, who was a Brigadier-General. The Secretary of State for War, Lord Derby, on being approached, agreed to this temporary promotion for me, and after some consideration I accepted the post.

At the end of December, finally relinquishing my duties at the Cabinet Secretariat, including that of Secretary of General Smuts's Cabinet Committee on the reorganization of the Air Ministry, I devoted my time to assisting the Ambassador designate in his preparations for his new role. The whole of January, 1918, also, was taken up in the collection of information which might prove useful and in the arrangement of conferences, interviews and so forth. As the day of departure approached, the pace became crescendo.

To relieve myself of some of the minor duties I had carried out on my first visit to Washington I took out, as my staff officer, the late Lieut.-Colonel Charles Kennedy Crauford-Stuart, of the Queen Mary's Own Baluch Light Infantry. Later, in Washington, when he wore his maroon regimental overalls—"his trousers of purple passion"—he created a sensation in social circles. He did valuable work. He was killed in 1942, in a bomb raid on Folkestone.

We left London by special train on the morning of the 1st February to board the *Olympic* at Liverpool. She was by far the largest vessel in which I had ever travelled. She had been victualled in America, and I remember that at our first meal Stuart and I, in spite of the richness and variety of the menu, contented ourselves with the white bread and butter—luxuries we had not seen for a long time. Once again we had to zig-zag round the north of Ireland until we got through the danger zone. After two days' severe storm, which threw the huge ship about in a way which I could not have believed possible, we reached New York on the 9th and Washington the next day.

Shortly after our arrival we were saddened by the news of the death in Canada of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, the late Ambassador, who had so ably borne the burden of high office during a most trying and critical period in our diplomatic relations with the United States. Spring-Rice was a career-diplomat of the old school. Whether he was tough enough to compete with the growing complicated financial and economic aspects of the Great War, I cannot judge. But he was a very cultured and lovable person.

Our new Ambassador early presented his credentials to the President at the White House. The staff of the

Embassy went with him, and this was the only occasion on which I met President Wilson, who was coldly and unenthusiastically correct. There followed a series of official diplomatic calls, on some of which I accompanied our Ambassador. The object of my attendance was to smooth H.E.'s way and make things easier for him; but it had on one occasion a contrary effect. We were calling at the Treasury. Ahead, I ran up the long flight of steps of the Treasury Building—at the top of which stood a sentry, who quite rightly challenged me. Looking over my shoulder towards my Chief, who was climbing the steps, I said confidentially, "British Ambassador" and passed in. To my astonishment Lord Reading did not follow. When I went to ascertain the cause I found the sentry was barring his way, insisting that one British Ambassador had already passed. "British Ambassador?" he said, "Nuthen doin'. I guess one has gone in already."

Lord Reading's position was an onerous one, and not the least difficult of his duties on his second visit was that of convincing the American Government of the significance of the time factor in the conduct of the war: that it was essential that as many troops as possible should be sent over to Europe without delay: that a policy of waiting until a sufficient number was collected for an organized self-contained American Army, which was General Pershing's intention, might be fatal, because they might arrive too late.

This aspect of our activities was one which interested me particularly as a soldier. But it so happened that circumstances early translated me from my position behind the scenes at Washington and precluded me from playing any part in the subsequent negotiations in regard to reinforcements. The same

cause, however, gave me the marvellous experience of witnessing at first hand the effect of the impact of war on the mass of the American people.

With their love for everything new or mechanical, the Americans had from the first been immensely intrigued by the Tanks—more so, perhaps, than by any other technical development of the War. For their information, I had in the summer of 1917, at the request of the Foreign Office, written a short impersonal account of the origin and significance of the New Arm. This article, which was over my name, was published in September, 1917, simultaneously in England and the United States, and attracted a good deal of notice. When therefore, I arrived in the States for the second time, I found that my name was somewhat embarrassingly well-known. And I was the recipient of many letters of enquiry and of suggestions. On seeing the name on my suit-case the Negro porter who handled it at the Grand Central Station in New York surprised me by asking: "Say, are you the Colonel Swinton of the Tanks?" One motor journal, indeed, was so kind as to present me with a bronze inkstand in the shape of a Tank. This accompanied me on my subsequent wanderings, and was used as an illustration when I was asked to talk about the new weapon.

By now the American people were in an incredible ferment of patriotic exaltation. This was due partly to their peculiar susceptibility to mass emotion and partly to the manner in which their feelings were whipped up to fever heat by propaganda and every agency calculated to influence the mind and inflame the temper. The possibility of opposition, on the part

of a section of the body politic of the "Great Melting Pot", to Uncle Sam's joining in the war no doubt accounted for the strenuousness and fervour of the exhortations made, which were of a nature not easily conceivable in England.

In February, 1918, among other campaigns, a fresh "drive" was being organized for the Third Liberty Loan—this corresponded to our Victory Loan in England. In the belief that owing to the Tanks my name might have some drawing power for propaganda, the State Department applied for the loan of my services as a speaker to tour the country on behalf of the Loan. I had not gone to America with any such object, though later in the year many wounded and incapacitated British officers and non-commissioned officers were specially sent out from England for the purpose of travelling round the country to talk about the war. Much as the opportunity of seeing a large part of the country appealed to me, I was appalled at the prospect of speaking publicly for weeks on end. But since the State Department considered that I might in this way help the cause, the Ambassador consented to my joining temporarily the band of Uncle Sam's "Spellbinders" for the Third Liberty Loan Drive. I was to start on 18th March at Chicago.

The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick had invited a member of the British Embassy to their Golden Jubilee Banquet in Cincinnati, Ohio, on 16th March, and I was deputed to attend this function. We had some doubts in Washington as to the nature of my reception, for relations between the Irish-Americans and the British were not at the moment particularly cordial. There need, however, have been no qualms on this

score. I was met, put up, and entertained in the most friendly and hospitable manner. I was all the more at my ease in that I did not receive till after the event an anonymous letter warning me not to go to the dinner. It was attended by some hundreds of guests and was a formidable but hilarious festival which lasted about six hours. Proceedings started with the American National Anthem and the respective national anthems of the Allies represented at the dinner, *Rule Britannia* being played as our national anthem until the mistake was corrected, and the air of *My Country 'Tis of Thee* was substituted. Each course of a long menu was followed by songs, mostly with choruses, in which the company joined more and more fervently as the evening wore on. The late ex-President Taft was present and maintained his reputation as an orator. He was a man of vast stature and girth, and I had been told that when he was amused his mirth could be gauged not so much by any sound he made as by the ripples which passed from his throat down his waistcoat. This I was able to confirm, for he was a genial soul and enjoyed his own jokes. When I had to rise to my feet I confined my words to some account of what the Irish had done in the war.

Next day, being Sunday, I stayed on in Cincinnati still under the hospitable care of the Brotherhood. To those who may not have had personal experience of being "taken care of" in the American sense it may be of interest to explain that it means that one is housed, fed, entertained, transported and cherished in every way possible by one's host and his friends. In my case it usually implied a "rubbernecking" motor drive round the city and to points of interest in

the neighbourhood; it often also included the presentation of sound liquor, so that a guest might not be tempted to drink "hooch". In 1918, when prohibition was not universal, this special attention was occasionally paid to me in the dry States.

The expression "rubberneck" was not then so familiar to us as it has since become, and a current story was that a typical Britisher, with monocle and spats, took his seat on the New York Elevated Railway opposite a woman carrying a remarkable-looking baby. At first he could not help staring at the child, but from politeness soon looked the other way. However, the fascination of the curious infant again drew his gaze. Whereupon the annoyed mother turned away from him and snarled "Yah. Rubber!" He, misunderstanding and unperturbed, refixed his eyeglass and replied: "My God, Madam! I thought it was real."

On my tour round the residential quarters of Cincinnati I was not so much struck by the magnificence of the private houses as by the simple beauty and suitability of their style and design to their purpose. Being modern, even the smaller homes were equipped with every convenience and luxury. Evidently, American architectural art was not confined to the erection of skyscrapers and palaces. The designing of private "homes" had been developed to a high degree.

Most, if not all of the States in the Union have a pet name. Ohio, I discovered, was the *Buckeye State*, and when my host finally escorted me to the railway station I ventured to enquire the meaning of this. He explained that a buckeye was a horse-chestnut—the mascot of the State—and that many people carried one about with them for luck. He himself had one

in his "vest" pocket, which he insisted on presenting to me—reluctant though I was to deprive him of it—and so, when the midnight train bore me off towards Chicago, together with delightful impressions of Irish-American good feeling and hospitality, I carried with me the luck of Ohio.

II.—“*Spell-binding*”

NEXT morning, my “spell-binding” job began. Amidst the clanging of bells and general noise, we ran into Chicago. Chicago! The metropolis of the Mid-West, the phoenix city that had been destroyed and rebuilt in record time, the centre of the pork-packing industry, the home of the beef barons and multi-millionaires. Had I not been told, ever since I landed, that until I reached the Mid-West and its capital I should not know the real America? As a first impression, after the railway stations at New York and Washington, that at Chicago was a disappointment.

On meeting the officials of the district organization of the Loan Campaign, I received my instructions and advice as to what was expected of me. In other words I was “put wise” to my job, which was to arouse the interest of the people in the war, to help them to realize its significance, and to spur them on to do their bit, which, at the moment, was to contribute their quota to the financial efforts of Uncle Sam, and “come across” with a handsome subscription to the Loan. My tour was to start in the State of Wisconsin—regarded as one of the most pro-German of all.

I was introduced to my colleague on the tour, Mr. Frank G. Odell, of Omaha, Neb., with whom I was to spend some weeks, to travel hundreds of miles, and to speak to hundreds of thousands of people, of both

sexes, all ages, many races, and every class. Differing in nationality, upbringing, career and outlook, Mr. Odell and I spoke the same language—with variations—had the same cause at heart, and got together at once, soon becoming fast friends. He had in turn been a mechanic, a mining man, a journalist, a man of business, and a bee expert, and was actually Secretary of the Federal Land Bank of Omaha. To me he was as new and refreshing a type as I seemed to be to him. At the moment the only point of divergence between us that mattered was that he was a practised public speaker and I was not. On the other hand, I had the advantage of him in being a novelty, for in most of the places in which we appeared I was the first British soldier in uniform that the population had ever seen—while he was in the bosom of his own people, or “folks”, as he always called them. He was a one hundred per cent “two-fisted go-getter,” as, indeed, were all those concerned in this campaign.

While in Chicago on this occasion I was impressed by the beauty of some of the sky-scrapers, the splendid vista of Michigan Avenue, the acres of automobiles parked on the reclaimed land between it and the Lake, the all-pervading noise and the general air of intense hustle. The University Club, where I put up, was a magnificent stone building. The dining-room, I was told, was a copy of the hall of one of the Oxford colleges. But after many years' residence in Oxford I have never discovered which.

We at once got down to business, and at 3 p.m. Mr. Odell and I, under the wing of the State Director of the Third Liberty Loan Drive, left Chicago for Racine—our first stamping ground—*en route* for Milwaukee. Thus began the first part of our *Odyssey*, which was

to last to the end of the month, during which time we were billed to visit twenty-two towns and cities before we returned to our base at Chicago.

For those who may be interested, the places where we were to speak during the first part of the tour were: in Wisconsin—Racine, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Fond du Lac, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Green Bay, Wausau, Appleton, Oshkosh, Janesville, Madison, Freeport, Beloit; in Illinois—Rockford, Aurora, Joliet, Ottawa, La Salle, Moline, Rock Island. As will be seen, the tour was much extended, and it lasted for seven weeks.

The course of our pilgrimage was like the memorable voyage down the Mississippi of the King and the Duke in *Huckleberry Finn*. I cannot apportion the rôles, but our tactics resembled those of Mark Twain's two immortal characters. As a rule we stopped at each place long enough to give our scheduled performance—often repeated at extra, unbilled séances—and then moved on quickly, before the enraged inhabitants could wreak their vengeance on us. I christened our little company *The Concert Party*, in which Odell represented the Nebraska Tiger and I the British Lion. Odell, with kindly courtesy, suggested that I—a British general and guest of Uncle Sam—should always have the honour, and speak first. But I persuaded him to take the lead at our first meeting, as a guide to me. When I discovered what a champion spellbinder he was and his faculty for putting over the “sob-stuff”, I persuaded him always to precede me. After he had broken the ice and shaken the audience I followed him up. He represented the shock troops; I the general reserve. The plan worked well. No one ever pulled a gun on us. No dead cats or eggs were thrown: nobody ever protested. Folks simply ate what we said.

This happy result was largely due to the eloquence and silvery tongue of the Tiger. But I soon discovered that I need have felt no alarm at the prospect of having to speak. At all times prone to oratory, the Americans—moved as they were by deep mass emotion—were at this period especially susceptible to the spoken word. Unless for any reason they disliked or distrusted a speaker, they would take anything from him, encourage him, meet him half-way and draw him out. Sentimental and emotional, they did not mind showing their feelings, and were the most responsive of audiences.

The programme varied at the different places according to the size of the town, the length of time we stayed in it, and the position occupied by our hosts. We were nearly always met at the railway station by a committee, consisting of the members of the local Liberty Loan Organization, accompanied sometimes by the mayor of the city and some of the leading residents. Occasionally there was a band and a military guard of honour. We were then escorted to the house where we were to be put up. Alternating with our billed meetings were luncheons and dinners at which the Tiger and I were the guests of honour. The set addresses were made in the local theatre or largest hall available, and usually did not exceed two in number in any town. Speeches, however, were always expected at the meals at which we were entertained; as well as at the factories, shipyards, churches, schools, and the like, on our tours round the towns.

With no experience whatever of public speaking, I did not at first realize to what extent a talker expends his nervous energy if he genuinely feels the sentiments he is trying to convey to his audiences. It took me a little time before I discovered this. On a tour, more-

over, such as the one I was carrying out, when I was a guest and always in the centre of the picture, I was continually the object of the kindly and hospitable attentions, curiosity, and thirst for knowledge of everyone around. In other words there was no let-up between the public functions, whether I was in the train, in my hotel, or in the street. Kindly strangers who met me by chance, or who searched me out, would introduce themselves and their friends. And then ensued the inevitable series of questions. I learnt to sympathise with kings, presidents, prime ministers and all those who from their position are obliged to live perpetually in the limelight. Sometimes I used to try to hide myself in my hotel, for my uniform made it impossible for me to lose myself in the crowd. But it was of no avail. It was the "glad hand" all the time. This is not an ungracious nor ungrateful comment on the overwhelming kindness which I received on all sides, but a confession, that I found what thousands of others had already discovered—that the great public, the "peepul", are vampires of nervous energy.

At the beginning I let myself go and gave free expression to my deep feelings. After speaking five times on the second day of our itinerary and six on the third I began to feel the strain. Occasionally, however, the tension was relieved. At one place I was asked to give an address at a very select girls' school. Unluckily, some kind friend had given me a stick of chewing-gum just before we arrived. Innocently I put it into my mouth, and found that I could not swallow it or get rid of it. After a struggle I extracted it, but it stuck to my fingers; and it was with remnants of chewing-gum on both hands that I entered the school and was shewn into the room where the pupils

were drawn up. Instead of shaking hands I bowed to the headmistress, who was rather surprised. However, she welcomed me cordially and turned to introduce me to the school—"Girls, this is the celebrated British Gen—". She did not finish, for taking a step forward, I put my foot on a loose rug on the polished floor, and, spurs digging grooves in the parquet, slid right into the centre of the room and sat down heavily in front of a row of astonished and giggling damsels! This performance broke no bones; but it broke the ice, and when the hysteria had somewhat abated I delivered, seated, one of the most successful homilies of my tour.

At another town, owing to some mistake, it was found impossible for Odell and me to hold a joint meeting, as the only hall which would have accommodated the audience expected was not available. Whilst he talked at the Court House, I was to do the same at a cinema theatre; and we were then to exchange platforms. This was a last minute arrangement, and I am certain that my first audience had not been warned of what was coming to them! The little theatre was crowded, and I was ushered into a small room at the side of the stage, where a charming young lady in a minimum of clothing was doing a song and dance. This room was only partly lit by the glare of the footlights. I had my model Tank with me—I always carried it, for I was almost invariably asked to say a word about the Tanks. I put it down on the only chair and stood watching the performer whilst my guide went off to arrange for my appearance. When the little lady had finished her "turn" amidst thunderous applause, kissing her hand, she skipped backwards into the room where I was. Turning round

she suddenly saw in the semi-darkness a fierce figure in a strange uniform, in what must have been her dressing-room. She gave a little shriek, "Oh, say!" and sat down hurriedly on the chair on which rested my Tank. She bounced up again even more hurriedly, repeating in a still louder and shriller tone, "*Oh, say!*" I grabbed my tank off the chair—alas, its lid was broken off—and attempted to explain my presence. But the lady, who was both surprised and, no doubt, sore, had no time for conversation, rapidly changed some of her garments and tripped back before the footlights. My explanation and apologies had to wait.

The 21st March, 1918, is a date not easily forgotten by any of us over twenty years of age. It was a crisis in history, the repercussions of which were at once felt in every quarter of the civilized world. So far as could be discerned by an onlooker, nowhere was its psychological effect greater than in the United States.

I shall never forget either the place or the manner in which the news of the Great German Offensive reached me. That day I was to talk at a shipyard at Manitowoc, Wisconsin, where, as in so many of the towns near the Great Lakes, ship-building was one of the principal industries. On mounting the platform I received a message from the editor of the local paper giving me the news that the Germans had that morning launched an attack on a great scale against the British —what did I think about it? All I could do was to express my firm conviction that though the Allied line might bend it would not break. Then—to continue the purely personal aspect of my narrative—I spent one of the worst hours I have ever been through. With this dread news at the back of my mind and my

thoughts far away with my own people on the Western Front, I had to talk brightly about the war in general. Perturbation, for the moment unexpressed, seized us all—speaker and audience. After our addresses, I was besieged by anxious people thirsting for information and my opinion on events. But I knew no more than they, and could only reiterate the confidence I had already expressed.

That the crisis of the 21st March created an immense impression on the people of the United States, and changed their attitude towards the conduct of the war is now a matter of history. So far as my experience went, the change was extraordinary. Up to that date the people were deeply interested, certainly, but their interest took the form of patriotic and optimistic enthusiasm. There was no anxiety. After that date a new note was observable—that of sympathy with the Allies, particularly ourselves ; anxiety about the future—lest the American assistance might be too late; and regret, sometimes fierce anger expressed in no measured language, that “ Uncle Sam ” had not come earlier into the war, was not alongside the Allies in greater force, and was not more forward in preparation.

For days on end, wherever I went, practically nothing else was discussed, and I was overwhelmed with earnest and sympathetic queries. Editors telephoned the latest bulletins to me at my hotel, and I was frequently invited to their offices and shewn the last cables from Europe. Anxiety as to what might be happening “ Over There ” had suddenly brought realization of the true nature of the struggle. Everywhere I saw the effect of this in the faces of my audi-

ences. What had been interest had now become absorbing passion.

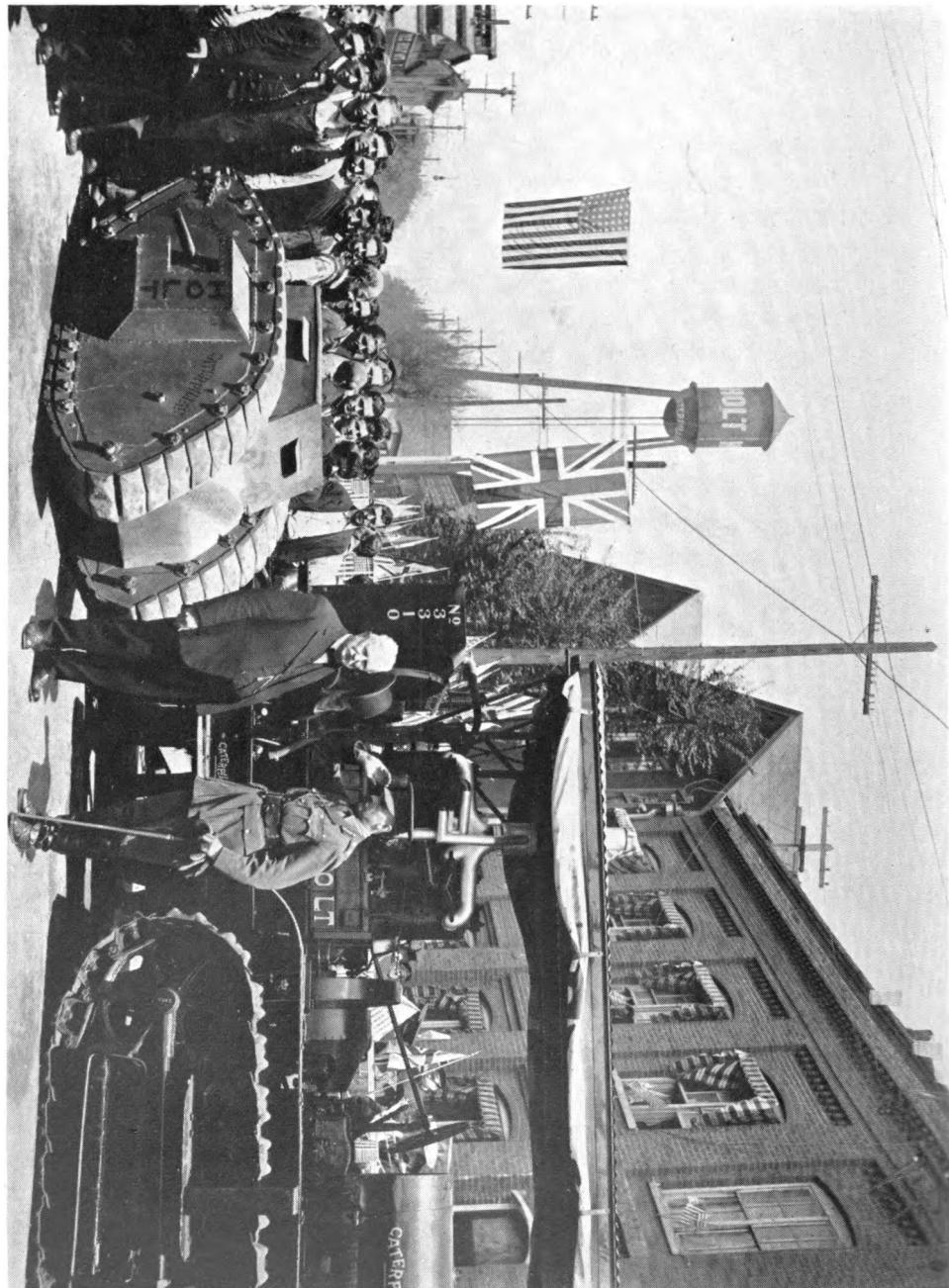
Appleton, one of our ports of call, reputed to be rather socialistically inclined, distinguished itself by being the first city in Wisconsin to exceed its allotted quota for subscription to the Liberty Loan, having "come across" with \$400,000 within three hours of the opening of the lists. Then to Oshkosh—a place I had for long thought to be only imaginary—the figment of a humorous journalist's brain. After a Sunday's rest in Chicago we continued our circuit. At Madison, the students of the University, at which we spoke, tried to shatter our nerves by their celebrated imitation of the ascent of a rocket, which starts with a hissing from all over the room. At Freeport we found ourselves across the State border, in Illinois, where special enthusiasm was shown, the tramcars being stopped and the shops shut whilst our talks were made outside the Court House. Back into Wisconsin for one night, to Beloit, and our parade across that State, which had been considered the most difficult of all, came to an end. The pet name of Wisconsin was the "Badger" State. But as I did not want to be saddled with a live specimen of its mascot, I refrained from any indiscreet questions. Ahead of us lay Illinois and the Northwest, for the scope of our itinerary had been extended. We took the opportunity to visit Camp Grant, where we were entertained by the General in command, and stopped at Elgin and Aurora.

Joliet is a place I shall always remember, not only on account of the exceptional nature of its hospitality, but for its public manifestation of feeling at a banquet given us. When Odell and I were shewn in, we found

ourselves in a large hall, the walls of which were draped with the flags of the Allies. Already seated at a table were five hundred men and women. A band struck up, and with one accord the whole company, each member waving a miniature Old Glory in one hand, and a miniature Union Jack in the other, rose to their feet and sang "Tipperary". I am not ashamed to admit that this knocked me out. That tune, those words, projected at me in a wave of sympathy by five hundred voices, carried me back to 1914. I again heard the tramp of the thousands of splendid men who three and a half years earlier had marched to war to that song. I saw again the streets of London, the *pavé* highways of France and Flanders, and the ghosts of the "Old Contemptibles" and Kitchener's Army—the British Army which had ceased to exist. This welcome was a wonderful gesture of friendship indicative of the sentiments of Joliet, Illinois. But it was one of which the poignant associations to a Briton could not have been realized. Not only was it remarkable that the necessary trouble should have been taken to organize such a reception, but the unrestrained display of friendliness was a staggering revelation. Fortunately, the chairman, on whose right I sat, realized my feelings and gave me time to recover.

We then touched at four places, one of which is memorable because, in his introduction of us the mayor spoke for over one hour himself. As his hearers remarked afterwards, it was Josh's chance; and he took it. Sunday saw us back again in Chicago for a night.

By special invitation we started the next week at Peoria, one of the two homes of the Holt Tractor—the prototype of the Tanks, and therefore of particular interest to me. Here our reception by the city and by



Reception at the Holt Manufacturing Company's works at Stockton, California, 1918,
showing the author with Mr. Benjamin Holt

the Holt workers was overwhelming. We were called upon to give an address in the factory. After I had finished my talk Odell informed the men that I had just received a cable to say that my son in the Gunners, who was fighting in France, was so far safe; whereupon the 1,000 men present gave three hearty cheers for him!

With hearts warmed by our welcome we left Peoria for Burlington, Iowa. Of this day three things stand out in my memory. At a junction, where our trains halted for a few minutes, I met Miss Edna Ferber, the celebrated novelist, who was touring the country with some other spellbinding party. Miss Ferber was a delightful lady, with a keen sense of humour. When, by way of giving her a really hot news item, I informed her "off the record" that at the last place at which we had spoken twenty people had been crushed to death trying to get into the hall to hear us, she came back with, "Was that so, General? And how many were killed trying to get out once you started?" She was a business woman. Before our train departed she made a discreet enquiry as to whether the two parties could not exchange British representatives. With her party was a sergeant!

Then, I got my first view of the Mississippi. As we rumbled across the long bridge I gazed entranced at the turgid waters of the mighty stream rolling below, southwards, past so many places whose names had become famous during the Civil War. Looking back, I realize how appropriate are both the words and music of *Ole Man River*.

Lastly, in the city I had another refreshing experience. On my way to dinner I met a man wearing a sort of uniform and a yachting cap on which was a

Red Cross. He sported a larger assortment of badges and buttons than any man I had ever seen except a coster "Pearly King". Stopping dead in front of me, he burst out, "Say! you do surprise me!" It must be remembered that I was in uniform.

"So you do me," I replied. "I know what's biting you."

"How's that?"

"You're wondering what in hell I am."

"I sure am."

"Well, I'm wondering what in hell you are. Let's guess." He grinned, "Sure, you shoot foist."

Looking at his hat, I hazarded that he was the "Lord High Muckamuck of the Red Cross."

He did not understand. I tried once more. "You're the big noise of the Red Cross."

"Wrорng. Guess again."

"I can't. What are you?"

"I am a trolley-car conductor", he answered with honest pride.

"You don't say?" I replied. "Now you shoot."

"I guess you're a Serbian orficer."

"Wrong. Guess again."

"A Belgian orficer?"

"Wrong."

"Gee! What in hell are you?"

"A British officer."

"Oh, boy!" he replied in surprise. "Can you beat it?"

"You can't," was my final remark, and shaking hands, each with a grin, we proceeded on our respective ways.

It was at Burlington that a kind friend presented me with a photograph of a steam caterpillar tractor

at work in a logging camp in the '70s or '80s of last century.

We took the midnight train at Davenport for Omaha. Omaha is to me a pretty, attractive name, as are so many others of Indian origin; and in 1918 it was associated in my mind with a dreamy waltz-tune then popular. But this hustling Western centre of the great stockyard industry was obviously a place far too alive to suggest dreamy waltzes or any other form of lotus-eating. Between our addresses we visited the stockyards and packing-houses where, of course, we had to speak. This was the first time that I had seen anything of this kind; and, though impressed, I was not attracted. Here, also, we had proof of the interest taken in the Tanks, for we were shown a full-size mock-up machine which had been made for the Liberty Parade. Nebraska was then one of the dry States. No liquor, therefore, was served at the banquet given to us at the club, but before we sat down to dinner we were taken to the clean, whitewashed cellars, where there were no servants, and a prominent citizen—incidentally, an ex-judge—mixed seductive cocktails. Next morning I received a message from the amateur bar-tender of the previous evening to say that he was sending me "a roll of manuscript" as a souvenir. It seemed a strange present; but I concluded that perhaps it was the custom of the country for a writer to present a sample of his work in script to an honoured guest. Sure enough, that evening, just before my train started, a messenger rushed up and handed to me a heavy, hard, cylindrical package wrapped in newspaper, with a note from the donor instructing me not to open it until I was out of Nebraska. When, later on, "George", the car attendant,

unlocked the bar, showing that we had crossed the boundary, I opened the parcel to find a quart bottle of my friend's special brew. A kindly deed! In my letter of thanks I stated that I had perused his MSS. open-mouthed, with much benefit to myself.

We spent two days at Minneapolis, spoke three times, and took part in a Liberty Loan Procession in a sleet storm. I did not have to be told that Minneapolis was a great wheat and flour centre, for the most prominent buildings were the towering grain elevators. At the neighbouring city of St. Paul we struck the least responsive audience we had so far met. From Minneapolis we made a three days' circular tour in South Dakota, during which we stopped off at five towns and spoke twelve times.

Then followed a long journey to Seattle, right up in the north-west corner of the country. We passed from Minnesota through South Dakota, Montana, a corner of Wyoming, and so into the State of Washington. The greater part of this journey was across the open rolling plains of what I imagined formed part of the Wheat Belt. It was uninteresting country, with a sparse population, and at times reminded me of India, South Africa and Russia. We called at only two towns of any size, Butte City, the copper centre, which could be descried from afar—a smudge on the horizon—and Spokane. It was night when we reached Spokane, but, though I saw nothing of it except the interior of two theatres and its brightly lit streets, I received a vivid impression of its aliveness. We were not billed to stop there, but on the way the happy thought occurred to our manager of arranging for the train to halt an hour whilst the Tiger and I were rushed up to the city to give one or two addresses. A

wire was despatched, and when we arrived we found a reception committee awaiting us. During that hectic hour we spoke three times, and I do not think that any of our surprised audiences had the slightest idea who we were. But, as I have said, at that time the people were taking "most anything".

We spoke—at a cinema show; at a street corner, from our motor-car, with electric trams whizzing by in both directions; and at a variety theatre, between two turns, where I had to ransom my brass hat from a charming dancer who had taken a fancy to it. Though our performances were unheralded, we received such a rousing reception that we only just managed to catch our train.

Next morning, through forests of the largest trees I had ever seen, we ran down into Seattle, on Puget Sound. After the country through which we had been passing for the last forty-eight hours, the fresh moist climate, the soft air, the rain, the dripping trees and the verdure were most refreshing and reminded me of home. Moreover, though the open sea was not visible from Seattle, I had reached the Pacific Ocean, for Puget Sound was an inlet of it. And I stood—

". . . like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

An added interest was that I was close to British territory, for not far off, almost due north, lay Victoria, British Columbia. My "skedule", however, did not permit of my setting foot on British soil. We spent a day and a half at Seattle, then a great shipbuilding centre and a hive of activity. We spoke three times.

Here, also, the orbit of our Liberty Loan Drive party intersected that of another planet of a different system. The United States was being scoured at that time by the speakers of I do not know how many patriotic organizations. In this case the National Service Section of the Emergency Fleet Corporation of the American Shipping Board was the other system, and the planet was the spellbinding party headed by Dr. Charles A. Eaton, Chairman of the Section. Dr. Eaton and his henchmen were going round the ship-building centres exhorting the men to do their utmost to produce tonnage to make up for that being sunk by the U-boats. He was a man of impressive presence, and had formerly been pastor of the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church in New York. He invited me to attend one of his meetings. I accepted gladly on condition that I did not have to talk. Next morning, on arrival at the shipyard, I found that the speaker's platform was on the keel of a large vessel under construction, of which the framework had been erected. This formed a marvellous natural amphitheatre, the audience being clustered all round. The speakers were thus at the bottom of a gigantic bowl lined with human beings. This audience, in that it consisted of what we call "dockyard maties", differed from those I had recently been addressing, which were mostly made up of townspeople.

Their gesture of welcome to me was the usual American one—a cigar—presented by a foreman on behalf of all workers in the yard. Dr. Eaton was a ready and persuasive speaker, and roused his hearers by the direct and forceful way in which he stated the case. In spite of all efforts, the tonnage of new vessels being launched by the Allies was not keeping pace

with that being sunk. I can recall now the allegory by which he illustrated the inevitable result.

Little Johnnie was a good boy, the most industrious in his school, but not very bright. And so, one day, to test him, his teacher said:

"Get your slate, Jorn, I have a problem for you. There is a well 100 feet deep, and at the bottom of the well is a cat trying to climb out. The walls are very slippery. The cat climbs up ten feet every day, but slips back eleven feet every night—How long will it take her to reach the top of the well? Do you get me?"

"Sure, teacher," said John, collecting a bunch of clean slates.

"Go to it, son." After five minutes the teacher looked in to see how John was getting on. The boy was still working with slates strewn all round him.

"Say, Jorn, haven't you figured out the answer to the problem yet?"

"Please, teacher, give me two more slates, and in one minute I'll have that cat in hell."

"Say, boys," concluded the Doctor in stentorian tones, "If we can't beat what we are doing I guess we'll be where Jorn put the cat."

Up the beautiful Puget Sound by steamboat—a great relief after the heat and dust of the railway—to Tacoma, another place striving to produce ships to counter the U-boat peril. Next morning a fleeting visit to Camp Lewis, one of the monster training centres dotted about the country, in which Uncle Sam was preparing his millions for the fray. It was more like a town than a camp—as I understood the word—and was the largest cantonment in America. It was marvellously laid out and, from our standard, luxuriously

equipped. I was much struck by the deadly earnestness of the troops. I saw one squad being taught to use the bayonet, and as each man plunged his blade into the quivering body of the enemy—a suspended sack—he grunted with the concentrated effort. If not satisfied with the energy of the blow, he waited for no word of command but repeated it. Now they were in it, these people meant serious business. And there were millions of them.

On southwards through Oregon, where the giant pines come from, by the *Shasta Limited*, the express so called because of the beautiful 14,000-foot-high Shasta Mountain of the Cascade Range, in view from the railway for many miles. A night in the train, then San Francisco on the following morning. San Francisco I thought one of the most attractive cities in the United States. What I saw of it, its position, its layout, its bay, its hills, and its inhabitants, I shall not easily forget.

Here we were to have a rest for two days without making any "skeduled" speeches, then to make a short circular tour to the South, and to return again. Those two days were a change, though not perhaps in the literal sense a rest, for the hospitality shewn to us by the inhabitants, the Loan Drive officials and some of the Holt Manufacturing Company, within whose orbit we had again arrived, kept us on the go.

My first morning was spent in meetings and correspondence. I was then borne off to lunch by a prominent British resident and out into the country by car, for a swim and an *al fresco* dinner cooked in the woods. This was a real rest. My host knew the game I had been playing. And I did not have to talk. He was the late Mr. H. M. Lawson, who had arranged for the

first Holt Caterpillar tractors to be sent to England in 1914—for transport purposes.

It was not long before this little reserve of energy came in useful, for on returning to my hotel at 11 p.m. I found that I was bidden to an entertainment at midnight. It was an amateur performance given by the pressmen of San Francisco to celebrate the twelfth anniversary of the conflagration; the concurrent earthquake was *not* referred to. The hospitality of the pressmen was unlimited and included an early breakfast of grapefruit and ham and eggs at the Press Club at 3.30 next morning.

I now began to suffer from the keen interest taken in the Tanks by people of every sort and degree, who rang up to discuss their ideas or make appointments, sometimes from long distances—on one occasion at midnight from three hundred miles away. In order to preserve me from these persistent gentry, the Tiger when taking a call for me, sometimes posed as my “aide”. But, taking my cue from him, I got badly caught out in San Francisco by a bright man who had invented a marvellous new Tank and wished to bring round his specification and drawings. As my own supposititious aide-de-camp, I replied to his phone request, “I am sorry Mr.—, I can’t make a date for you with the General. He is out of the hotel; he has left San Francisco; he is dead!” That was that! Ping! I hung up the receiver with a malicious bang and the happy feeling of having got rid of a tormentor rather cleverly. But little did I know the persistence and resource of the breed. Twenty minutes later, as I crossed the hall of the hotel, a pleasant-faced clean-shaven man got up from his seat and approached me. Horrors! He was carrying a roll of blue prints under

his arm. I looked round. I was right out in the open, no door, no friendly pillar, no palm tree behind which to take cover. There was no escape. A twinkle in his eye, but with the cold clear voice of doom he said, "I am Mr.—. Pleased to meet you, General. I thought you would be coming along. I have my li'l' roll of blue prints right here, and I'll put you wise to my notion inside five minutes." .

From San Francisco we made a circular tour by car, to Stockton, the second home of the Holt Caterpillar Tractor. Here I had a hearty reception of the type accorded me at Peoria, and for the same reason. I met Mr. Benjamin Holt, the inventor of the machine bearing his name and founder of the company. I was taken all over the works and then presented with a small tractor. After motoring on and giving addresses at Modesto, Fresno, and San José, we returned to San Francisco by road. During those two days we had covered some six hundred miles of the most beautiful country at the best time of year, when all the flowers and fruit blossoms were out. Much as I liked the State, I liked the people more. They were so forthcoming, broadminded in their views and catholic in their tastes.

Some of our audiences were composed of enthusiastic but unsophisticated townspeople, who were greatly moved by our joint talks. Often, by the time we had finished, many of them were in tears. In the crowd which surged round us at one town an old man sidled up and silently pressed a five-dollar gold bit into my hand. He tried to tell me what he wanted me to do with it; but was weeping so much that he could not speak. Odell, noticing my embarrassment, saved the situation—"That's for the Red Cross, General"—

and to that organization it eventually went. I was much touched by the sincere emotion aroused and by the confiding simplicity of the people. One father and mother, eyes filled with tears, gave me the latest letter received from their son—a corporal of Marines in France. They were under the impression that I should naturally meet him; and it was impossible to persuade them of the improbability of this.

The letter was of so moving a nature and the writer so obviously homesick, that when I got back to England I wrote to him to say that I had seen his parents strong and well. But I received no reply, and, with regret, came to the conclusion that he had become a casualty.

Back at San Francisco at 2 a.m. we had one full day before taking train for the South. We were entertained at lunch by a large part of the leading men of the city; but the *pièce de résistance* remained for the evening, when we were to speak at the Auditorium, a building capable of holding over ten thousand people. At a dinner, given to us by the Liberty Loan officials before the meeting, I was introduced to a delightful person—Mr. William S. Hart—who was for some reason wearing cowboy clothes and a shirt of so wicked a pattern that it would have made a rhinoceros shy. He was, I was told, a very popular movie-actor. After dinner we went through the heart of the city to the Auditorium, in an imposing procession headed by two battalions of infantry, a naval band, mounted police, and several full-size replicas of Tanks (which I took as a delicate personal compliment), followed by the cars conveying some of the civic officials, Mr. Hart and myself.

The windows of the high buildings on each side of the streets were filled with fair ladies and brave men—

the former predominating—who shouted, waved handkerchiefs, kissed their hands, and threw down paper streamers—another tribute to a British General! I felt like royalty, and looking upwards, smiled, bowed right and left, and touched my brass hat in the approved fashion. But I could not quite understand what the people were shouting, though it was obviously a welcome. How quick were these friendly Western folk to take a stranger to their hearts! As we reached the end of our journey I turned to my companion, “A great reception, Mr. Hart. I might say a magnificent reception. I’ve never had anything like this before.”

“Sure,” he replied, with a suspicion of a twinkle in his eye.

“But I don’t quite tumble to what they’re saying,” I continued; “it sounds like ‘something Bill’.”

“General,” replied Mr. William S. Hart, this time with a broad grin, patting the breast of his wild shirt, “I—am—Bill Hart—‘Bad Bill !’” Much laughter and mutual back-slapping. This was the late Bill Hart—then a celebrated cowboy movie-star.

The Auditorium was crammed. Addresses were given by Odell, Mr. Hart, myself and some others. It was the biggest collection of people before whom I had ever held forth; and it will, I hope, continue to hold that record. The effect of standing up before that sea of faces, in front of 20,000 eyes, and of speaking to 20,000 ears, was paralysing; and I doubt if those at the back of the hall heard a word of what I said. There were no mikes then.

And so across the ferry to Oakland, a hasty farewell to kind friends who had looked after us, and we were off to the South by the midnight train. Goodbye to

genial, pleasant, friendly San Francisco, which, in spite of the fact that one of its leading papers had dubbed me a "man of steel" and a "democratic notable," had quite won my heart.

From Bakersfield next morning a car-ride over the mountains, through beautiful scenery, brought us to Pasadena—the haunt of tired and retired millionaires, the slickest spot on earth, where everything was "just so," and each blade of grass and every orange exactly in its proper place. I recalled old Blücher's apocryphal remark on seeing London—"What a city to sack!" Dinner with the Board of Trade and speeches afterwards to five hundred people, mostly of a leisured class—with which I had not so far come into contact on my tour—who had settled in this lotus-eater's Paradise.

Then on by road to Los Angeles and Hollywood, which was not in our schedule but was an extra and special treat. I found it to be a collection of places. The ex-Senator, who had assumed hospitable charge of us from Pasadena onwards until we should leave Los Angeles, did his duty nobly. At Hollywood he took us to see a film being produced. I cannot recall its name, but the actual scene being shot was *In the Harem*. Here we found, within four walls open to the sky, a perfect reproduction of an oriental interior, Moorish walls and arches, marble pillars, fountains, divans, alcoves, gigantic Negro guards with scimitars, reputed eunuchs, and caliphs—all according to Arabian Nights ritual. And last, but not least, attired in silken trousers, reclining in seductive attitudes, on luxurious cushions, was a bevy of the most beautiful houris ever seen outside Paradise. Those producing the film kindly held up the action and explained what was being done. One of these gentlemen, still more

kindly, asked if I would like to meet some of the ladies. It was an attractive invitation, and I accepted with alacrity, and took a pace forward. Then my guardian angel intervened. I became aware of the battery of cameras all round me. In a flash I pictured the headlines in the newspapers of the Pacific Coast next morning — “BRITISH GENERAL IN THE HAREM!!” — “MAN OF STEEL AMIDST THE LOVELIES OF HOLLYWOOD!!” with pictures, of me in uniform among a whole bevy of sirens. I shuddered. I made a bolt back to the ex-Senator for safety and chaperonage. No explanation of my lack of gallantry was necessary—a wave of my hand at the semicircle of cameras, and everyone burst out laughing. The chairman of the meeting at the Auditorium in Los Angeles that evening was my ex-Senator. He introduced me to the audience as a real he-man because the first place I had insisted on visiting on my arrival was the Harem at Hollywood! There was a howl of laughter, which increased sevenfold when I, admitting the soft impeachment, and ignorant of the chairman’s reputation, countered by disclosing that I had clung to him as a chaperone.

The Bond campaign was now at its height. As sales seemed to have slackened off, we were now, at 11.30 p.m., invited to repair, after the Auditorium meeting, to the square in the centre of the city, and help to persuade the populace, already gorged with bonds, to purchase still more.

I have rarely witnessed such a curious scene. Under the sizzling arc-lights, at a corner of the square, with electric trams whirring past every minute, was a large replica of a Tank. Behind a canvas screen along its length a Darkie band was playing jazz in spasms of

frantic vigour. In front of it was a collection of campaign helpers trying to sell more bonds. When I climbed up on the Tank I was introduced to the weary but excited crowd as a celebrated British General, and then to a most charming lady, Miss Clara Kimball Young, who, it was whispered to me, was a movie-star of the first magnitude. The people were then told by megaphone that if they would come up and buy more bonds, each receipt would be signed by the beautiful Miss Young and the Royal British General. Miss Young produced a fountain pen, and we both sat down with our legs dangling over the edge of the Tank and signed receipts. The hoarse voice of the "barker"—salesman—just behind me shouting out, "Shoot! Shoot!! Shoot!!! " was disconcerting, until I discovered that it was merely an invitation to buy. Before 1 a.m. several thousand dollars' worth more bonds were sold.

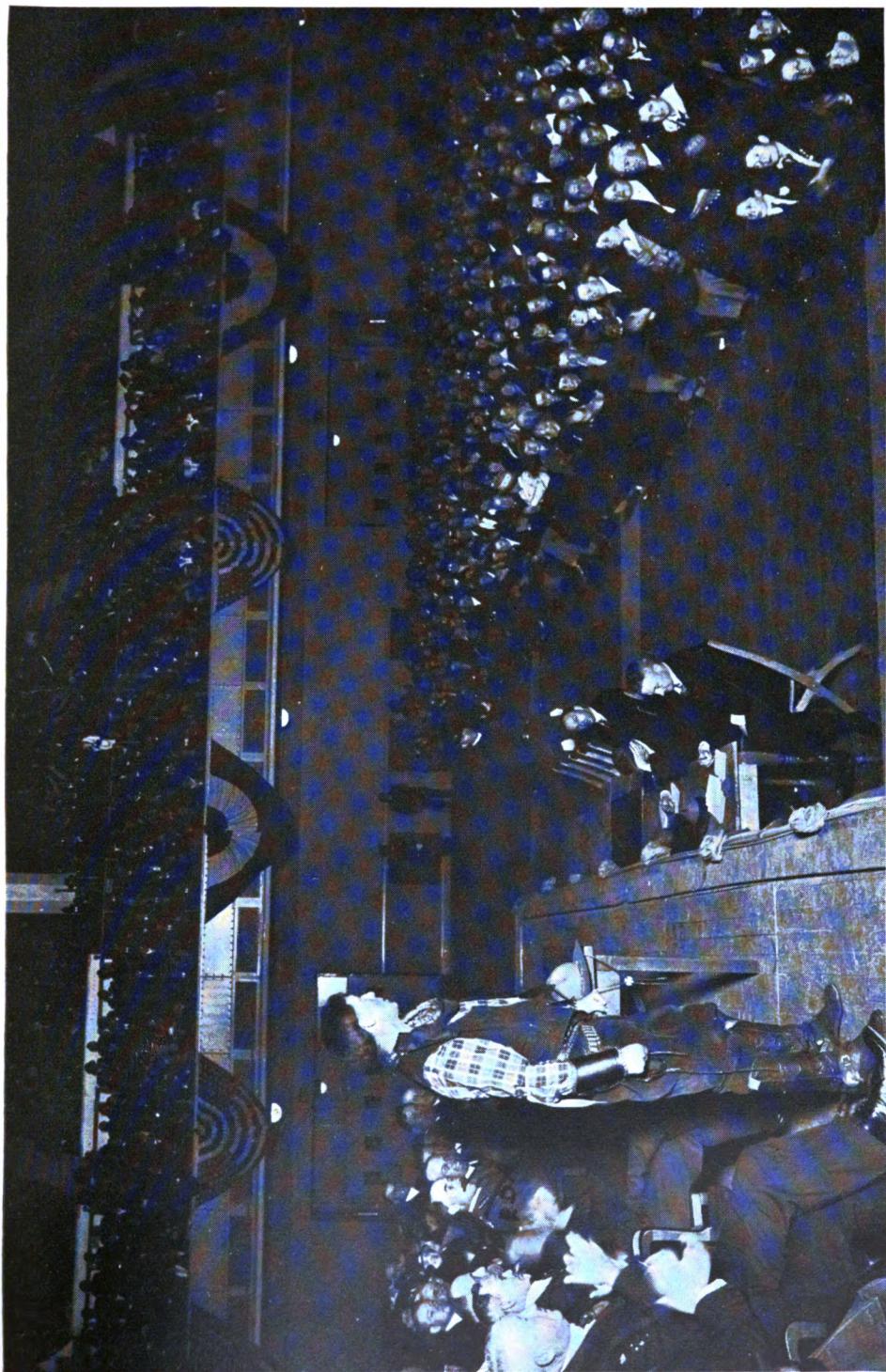
Los Angeles was certainly a very live city and a fierce competitor in population, wealth, growth and all amenities with its older rival San Francisco. Much sympathy was extended to me because I had had to stay at the latter inferior place!

After a Sunday of rest at Los Angeles, which included a motor-ride to the coast and various places round about, we left for Arizona. On the train was a number of recruits, from one of the universities, from whom I received an invitation to go to their car and tell them all about the War. At Tucson, where we alighted, they paraded on the platform and gave me a farewell salute. The weather was now extremely hot, and the flat country, with hills in the distance, was much like the plains of India. From Tucson to Bisbee our journey was by car. At Douglas, our next

halt, I witnessed the presentation of colours to a regiment of Arizona cavalry. El Paso, the only place I saw in Texas, was *en fête*, and the streets were lined by troops. A review was held of the greater part of a division, and the physique of the troops much impressed me. I was amused by the notice "Bullet-proof Rooms," printed in red on the notepaper of a hotel close to the Mexican border. I believe that guests were charged extra for such *suites de luxe*. At Dening I was received by a guard of honour of the 134th Minnesota Regiment. The men may have been specially picked, but they were certainly magnificent specimens. I was then taken round to Camp Cody, close by, where I met the Commander and the senior officers of the Division, as well as the British instructors, at lunch. Our stay at Albuquerque was stamped on my mind because of the news which reached me there of the terrible British casualties on the Western Front. And I could not help comparing the few lines in the American papers given to this tale of death with the space allotted to accounts of how an American corporal fired the first American shell in the War.

And so goodbye to my Nebraska Tiger and all the kind friends who had taken so much care of me, and back to the British atmosphere of the Embassy at Washington.

After five weeks in the capital, with occasional visits to New York, and one to the stupendous "fabricated" ship-plant at Hog Island, near Philadelphia, a chance came my way to see something of America's war effort. I was invited, and agreed, to speak for the National Service Section of the U.S. Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation, of which Dr.



Bill Hart speaking for the Third Liberty Loan drive at the Auditorium, San Francisco, 1918

Eaton—my friend of the shipyard in Seattle—was chairman, in its campaign to speed up production. This was being pressed on at every yard, from that for fabricated ships at Hog Island to the small slipways on the Lakes.

This tour, which lasted for four weeks of June and July, brought me in touch with an entirely new stratum of the American people. On the Loan Drive I had spoken to audiences of town and country people of every degree and walk of life. Outside the great cities my audiences—so I was told—were largely composed of the “Hicks”, “Reubs”, “village cut-ups” and “school-marms”. They included, presumably, the denizens of “Main Street” and a certain proportion of “Babbitts”. The bulk of those I was now to face was composed of artisans and workmen engaged in the heavy industries, such as ship-building, steel, and munitions of every type. Amongst them there was a proportion of hyphenated American citizens—“Wops”, “Dutchmen”, “Bohuncs”, etc.—from all parts of Europe, some of whom must have found it difficult to understand what I said.

This second journey was a revelation to me of the scale on which the country was getting down to the production of war material. The layouts of plant were grandiose in conception, and the output would eventually be colossal. But the question I kept asking myself was, *When?* The value of time as a factor in winning the war seemed to have been appreciated only since the Great German Push of the 21st March.

On this tour I had as a co-spellbinder Dr. Willis A. Moore, a Universalist clergyman from Detroit. I did not know what a Universalist was, and I don’t know now, but Doc. Moore as an effective speaker was no

whit behind the Nebraska Tiger of my first journey. Our party was taken care of by Mr. W. Morris Houghton of New York, who also arranged for the publicity. We did not cover so large a tract of country as I had done on my previous trip. And, owing to comparatively short daily journeys and the reduced number of our talks, the tour was less exhausting. We worked at first in the Delaware River shipbuilding district, from Philadelphia as a centre, and then in the industrial area of Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan, with Chicago as our base, going as far afield as Detroit.

Mr. Houghton, a graduate of Harvard and now with the *New York Herald Tribune*, always arranged for me to see the Press representatives together, so that one interview covered the whole of my "story". At Chicago, he at once got into touch with the Central News Bureau—or whatever the institution was called—to arrange this. One pressman thought that he had met me on my previous visit and was not certain whether I would be of any news value to him. To make sure, he asked Houghton if I was the guy with the bald head and bow legs. On being informed that I had not got much hair, he was kind enough to say, "I guess that's him. He's a peach, I'll come right along."

In common with many—not all—of my countrymen, I have always disliked personal publicity, and I used to have a wholesome dread of the newspaper reporter, especially of the American variety. Whilst in the United States my diplomatic position made it essential that I should be guarded in anything I said, and I feared greatly that I might be misquoted if I dared to open my mouth. Still, I realized that the correspondents had their work to do, and that I was

temporarily of news value, so I always tried to meet them half-way and give them a square deal; and I never once had cause to regret my confidence, for I was never let down.

Amongst other functions which I attended in Chicago, was an important luncheon given by the Illinois Manufacturers' Association to some of the high officials of the Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation. This was followed by a banquet to Mr. Charles Schwab. On the 4th July I was present at the launching of a ship of 3,500 tons, one of ninety-four vessels which took the water on that day at different yards all over the States. A previously launched ship of similar tonnage was at the same time handed over to the Government completely equipped. That evening I attended a dinner to Mr. Newton P. Baker, Secretary of State for War. This was followed by a mass meeting at which he was the star turn. In his desire to impress his audience with the achievements of the Government and with the extent of Uncle Sam's military effort, Mr. Baker omitted any mention of all that had been done by the British to help the Americans in the way of transport, munitions, and equipment. Knowing the facts, I found it difficult to restrain myself from making a public protest, but, being a diplomat, I refrained. During two days at Detroit we went over several engineering concerns engaged in munition work, including the Ford plant, which served to increase the impression I had already received of the enormous output that would eventually be attained. Mr. Henry Ford, unluckily, was away. Thirteen years later I had the pleasure of entertaining his son, the late Mr. Edsel Ford, and his grandson, Mr. Henry Ford, the present head of the firm, in Oxford.

The Ambassador now recalled me to the Embassy to accompany him home, and on the 17th July, after thirty-seven meetings, I said goodbye to my Chicago friends, the "Doc" and Mr. Houghton, and left for Washington. My last recollection of Chicago was of a dear old lady, who took me for a red-cap (railway porter) testily plucking me by the sleeve and asking me in peremptory tones what time the next train left for Columbus, Ohio. I answered politely, hoping for a "quarter"—which I did not get!

I spent some days between Washington and New York, during which time we paid a visit with Mr. Charles Schwab, the millionaire steel magnate, and President of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, to the immense fabricated shipyard at Hog Island, near Philadelphia, where there were fifty building slipways for the assembling of parts produced in works all over the States and in Canada. We travelled in Mr. Schwab's private Pullman car. Charlie Schwab, as he was always called, was a noted raconteur and kept us all entertained. As a lesson in humility, learned when he had first begun to feel important, he told us how he was being driven along in his buggy by his Negro groom, when they passed a Darkie mammie leading a little Darkie girl who was weeping bitterly: "Shh, Honey, don't you see who that is in the buggy? That's Charlie Schwab!" The tears stopped at once, "Which one, Momma?"

We sailed in the *Mauretania* on 30th July. New York, with its beautiful but terrifying skyscrapers, its clamour, its heat, and all its hectic life, gradually grew smaller and fainter, slid away into the distance and finally dissolved in the heat haze. By the time the

Ambrose Lightship had dropped astern, the United States had become a memory.

On board were five thousand American troops. The freemasonry of uniform, unhampered by an exaggerated deference inspired by rank—mine was usually not recognized—speedily led to acquaintance with many of them. These “Huskies” were mostly fine, simple fellows, of different racial types. Excited, all agog, and keen at the prospect in front of them, they were subdued and desperately in earnest, like the men I had watched, weeks earlier, at Camp Lewis.

The difference between the atmosphere on board the *Mauretania* and that of a transport full of light-hearted British troops under similar conditions, was marked. To these young Americans it was from the very start so much more uprooting, literally an adventure. Many had never been away from their home towns, some had never been outside their own States. And of the latter the great proportion had never seen the sea.

The evening of our first day out, I stood on the poop and watched the sun sink below the sea. The quivering of the great vessel to the throb of her mighty engines again brought to my mind the picture of the Train of State, of which she and her freight of human beings formed a part. And radiating out from below the western horizon, now a dark line against the afterglow in the sky, I could still feel the heart of the people pulsating.

Once again, softly in the distance, I thought I heard *Tipperary* sung with intense fervour by five hundred men and women, and saw them rise, with one spontaneous movement, waving little flags in a glow of patriotism. Once again, above the clamour and roar

of electric tramcars, I heard frenzied and raucous shouts of "Shoot!" Shoot!! Shoot !!!" Once again I felt something hard silently pressed into my hand by an old man inarticulate with emotion. Once again—

"Over there! Over there!" Reverie was shattered, reminiscence became superfluous. The volume of actual sound which now burst upon my ears repeated the same message. It came from the throats of hundreds of doughboys, within hearing, within sight, within touch, who were but a ripple of the tidal wave of manhood surging forward to reinforce those who had so long borne the burden and the heat of the day. Leviathan was under way.

Similar scenes must have been witnessed during the Second World War, though the temper of the millions of Americans who then hurried over must have been fiercer. In 1918 they were filled with the war spirit, all right. But they had not as a nation been kicked in the pants!

CHAPTER VII

BETWIXT AND BETWEEN

Ministry of Labour

THE war was over. As a Colonel, and temporary Major-General, there seemed little place for me with my Corps and less on the Staff of the Army. I was not passed staff college (p.s.c.) and had held none of the routine appointments which according to regulations might have qualified me for service on the Staff.

Whatever merit I might have acquired in regard to the creation of the Tanks had been rewarded by a brevet Colonely. My place in the C.I.D. Secretariat had been filled. The future seemed blank.

Of the many pressing problems facing the nation in the immense task of changing over from war to peace the most crucial for the moment was that of the demobilization and settlement in civil life of our huge army. This had been initiated by Sir Stephenson Kent under the Minister of Labour, Sir Robert Horne. Measures to deal with this change-over had been considered in anticipation by a temporary Ministry of Reconstruction. Certain principles for adoption had been laid down and a scheme worked out. Sir Stephenson invited me to join him as Controller of Information and Publicity. I accepted and transferred my headquarters the few yards from Whitehall Gardens to Richmond Terrace.

Thousands of men were being released, and were to be released, from the Army. The difficulty was how to absorb them smoothly into the national life, with due justice to their claims to priority of release and

without swamping industry by the sudden irruption of great masses of men wanting employment.

The scheme for reconciling these opposing factors had been prepared, and issued in a printed pamphlet. In this the question of priorities had been settled on a basis which was reasonable and fair both to the men and to industry. Among the first to be demobilized were "key" men whose return would provide work for others in an accumulative measure. Priority, also, was to be given to only sons and one-man businesses. But this implied that many who had only just been called up might be freed before those who had been on active service for the whole or greater part of the war. The glaring injustice of this naturally caused great discontent. I cannot remember how far these regulations were disseminated in the widely scattered Army. But the fact was that they were not understood by the officers—let alone the rank and file—who did receive them. There was therefore great confusion and bitterness. And, apart from general considerations of justice, the morale and discipline of the troops still in the field had to be maintained. Unfortunately, the views of G.H.Q. France were ignored.¹

Obviously the most urgent thing to be done was to decide on a policy and then let the Army know what was intended. The latter called for a more direct and speedier system of communication than the normal official channels. In January 1919, rioting broke out at the Embarkation Camp at Calais and among returning leave men. And there was a large mass meeting of soldiers on the Horse Guards parade, which was

¹ A scheme had been prepared by the late Lieut.-General Sir Basil Burnett-Hitchcock, the Deputy Quartermaster-General at Haig's headquarters, summoned home for the purpose. It was not accepted by the Prime Minister, Mr. David Lloyd George.

addressed by Sir William Robertson, without effect. The situation was beginning to look serious. It was a critical moment and not one for letting the ship sink for a ha'porth o' tar or by action through the official channel. At this moment I received a call from two experts of the Dorland Advertising Agency, a commercial firm which appreciated the seriousness of the crisis, who came to see me with a proposal for the dissemination of information to the troops quickly and in plain language. The scheme was for publicity by advertisement in the daily papers.

I saw Lord Milner, then Secretary of State for War, who at once realized the nature of the situation and agreed to the proposed publicity. The Treasury, also, was fully seized of the urgency of the need for action, and at once sanctioned the expenditure by me of several thousands of pounds, both in the news columns and display advertisements; of this I took full advantage.

The scheme was to circulate special editions of the Continental *Daily Mail* with "hot" official information which would be telephoned to someone in Paris over the War Office private line. The Continental *Daily Mail* in Paris helped in every way, even to hiring additional printing machinery. More than one special edition was rushed out to all railheads on the Western Front on the supply trains from Paris. Then, in order to continue this news service we made a contract with the Continental *Daily Mail* and also with *John Bull*, which were the two papers most read by the rank and file, copies being sent over to the units. In *John Bull* we took over and paid for the page "Answers to Correspondents", which was entirely filled with information concerning demobilization. All this called for a special release of "newsprint" and was the cause of

a slight misunderstanding on the part of our Allies, who supplied six tons of toilet paper !

During the war there had been a weekly paper issued to the troops called *Blighty*. This was continued under the name of *The Billet* as a free issue. The heading of the leading article in the first number in January, was "Steady, boys, steady", which illustrates the tone of the paper. Working under me were journalists, illustrators, and poster artists. From January onwards thousands of copies of *The Billet* were sent to the troops in all theatres. It contained its own correspondence columns in which instructions on demobilization were printed in plain English. It also included illustrations and articles of a lighter nature. These measures had a sedative effect; and further serious trouble in the Army was averted. I have fortunately preserved a complete bound set of this soldiers' journal.

It was now, through my efforts to inform the Army of the demobilization arrangements, that I became acquainted with the late Lord Riddell, then Sir George Riddell, proprietor of the *News of the World*. After a preliminary skirmish on the telephone our acquaintance developed into friendship. Sir George Riddell rang me up to demand by what right I had given running contracts to the two newspapers I have mentioned. I asked him who he was. His name, given in a very peremptory tone, conveyed nothing to me. "By what right do you question my action?" was my rejoinder. "I am Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Government Dealings with the Press." "Oh, are you?", I answered. "I am Controller of Information and Publicity for Demobilization, and have Treasury sanction for what I am doing. To obviate grave trouble in the Army I have bought

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"SECOND THOUGHTS."



TOMMY: Hello, Bill! I thought you were "demobbed" and "safe, safe at Home" weeks ago?
BILL: I thought I'd just wait until folks at home had "settled down to business," so I volunteered to stay on.

space in the two papers most widely read by our troops abroad. Have you any objection?"

I was as brusque as he was. I had "plenty on my plate" already without being badgered by strange men. I could tell by his tone that he was a man to stand up to. Being a leading newspaper proprietor, he had obviously been accustomed to wield absolute power over hundreds of men whose living depended on his goodwill.

Part of the scheme for re-settlement included the establishment of Labour Exchanges to which men wanting employment could apply. Many of these already existed. But they were dreary, drab and dirty places with dispirited crowds queuing up outside. It struck me that the motto above their doors might well have been "Abandon hope all ye that enter here". I therefore borrowed the services of an expert shop-window dresser from the late Mr. Selfridge to make suggestions to brighten up these dismal places. His advice was invaluable so far as attractiveness went. I knew that the officials could not create jobs which did not exist. But the exchanges could impart a ray of hope. My poster artists were also busy in advertising their existence and the manner in which they could be used, and various towns all over the country were soon covered with their very telling efforts.

This was needed for in 1919, under Sir Eric Geddes, was launched the much boosted economy campaign, which, as always after a war, was largely directed against the Fighting Services, upon which Sir Eric was ruthlessly wielding the "Axe". Its blows seemed to be aimed more at reducing the strength of the armed forces than improving the method of their employment. So great was the agitation—fanned by head-

lines—in the Press, declaiming against the waste of the tax-payers' money, etc., that I was moved to write a personal letter to Mr. Churchill, then War Secretary and Air Minister, on the subject of "Economy of Force" in the Future Army.

It was a plea for cutting down the great cost of holding sections of the Empire by replacing part of the man-power—always the most expensive item—by fewer men and more armoured fighting vehicles, supplemented by aeroplanes. My argument was particularly directed to Mesopotamia, where we were wasting millions by our method of holding an "unarmed" country. To my mind it was an example of "brute force and——ignorance". The letter was duly acknowledged by Mr. Churchill's secretary, Sir Edward Marsh, and within a short time orders were received by the Chief of the Air Staff to go into the matter. It may have been *propter hoc*, or merely *post hoc*, but the method of holding Mesopotamia was reorganized. The ground troops were cut down, and more reliance placed on mechanization and the air. What was done went farther than anything contemplated by me, for the R.A.F. was made responsible for holding the country. I have been reminded of this by reading *A Soldier's Saga*, the late General Sir Aylmer Haldane's autobiography, in which he relates that just before he went to Mesopotamia as C.-in-C. in February 1920, he received the personal instructions of the Secretary of State to make drastic reductions in the garrison of the country, the cost of which was becoming intolerable to the British taxpayer. He then describes the measures adopted to carry out instructions. The result was that in one year twenty million pounds were saved. Haldane was thanked for what he had done, but no more. The usual story.

Air Ministry

In April the Department of Civil Aviation of the Air Ministry was inaugurated. Sir Frederick Sykes, who was at its head, invited me to join him as Controller of Information. By now I had made up my mind to retire from the Army, and as Civil Aviation seemed to promise a more interesting and lasting future than obsolescent demobilization, I accepted the post and sent in my papers resigning from the Army after thirty-one years' service, and, as a temporary civil servant, moved across to the Hotel Cecil, which was then the headquarters of the Air Ministry.

This was almost at the birth of that Ministry, and I was much intrigued to watch its expansion. As soon as a Permanent Under-Secretary had been appointed its growth was phenomenal. The Ministry soon moved from the Hotel Cecil over to Adastral House in Kingsway, where it had a whole new building to accommodate its increasing numbers. There were the empty rooms waiting. They were quickly furnished on the scale demanded by the different grades of the Civil Service hierarchy.

I did not consider that the Government attached sufficient importance to the subject of Civil Aviation, which was then in its infancy but was bound to grow with the lapse of time and the continuance of peace conditions. The Service (R.A.F.) side of the Ministry was hostile to civil aviation, its younger sister upon whom it might have largely to depend in the future. In comparison with what was happening in Germany the development of "Air Sense" among our population was woefully deficient despite the strenuous efforts

of a few enthusiasts and of the Air League. There was an apathetic attitude towards it. I was of course in touch with the trade, to help which I regarded as a most important part of my duty. But I found it impossible to get the aviation firms to combine and act on a national scale so as not to miss the chance for foreign business which we were, after the conclusion of hostilities, well equipped to seize. It was a "seller's market" and we had the goods to sell in the shape of thousands of machines and accessories. Owing to jealousies between the firms, the larger ones preferred to remain aloof rather than join with others they regarded as less important.

From the Intelligence at the Air Ministry and other sources I got early news of potential openings for business all over the world. This I sent out to the trade once a week, and to the Society of British Aircraft Constructors. When news came in of some special fleeting chance, which must be seized at once if at all, I circulated the news the same day that I received it. I remember that such items were mimeographed on bright green paper under the heading of "HOT CAKES". But on the whole our aviation industry did not take full advantage of its chances. The permanent civil servants appeared to be rather scandalised at my unorthodox methods.

The Under-Secretary for Air when I joined the Ministry was Jack Seeley—the late Lord Mottistone. He was followed by the late Lord Londonderry. The Chief of the Air Staff during the whole of this period was Marshal of the Air Force Lord Trenchard.

As publicity was my job I kept in touch with the newspapers, and many of their air correspondents used to visit my office. On my staff I had four or five

expert journalists who had served in the R.F.C. They knew something about aviation as well as their own game. One inquisitive newspaperman was intrigued to discover why I was not an Air Marshal. I pointed over my shoulder to Muirhead Bone's spirited picture of a tank in action, which was on the wall behind my chair, and explained that if I had to be any sort of a Marshal it was a "Mud Marshal".

An outstanding event in 1919 was the voyage of the Airship R. 34, under the command of the late Air Commodore E. M. Maitland, to Canada and back. This was the first commercial voyage of its kind and caused intense interest. Maitland was a firm believer in the future of the airship and continued to press its claims, but unhappily he, with other gallant officers, lost their lives a few years later when the R.38 broke in half over Hull. Finally, in 1930 the disaster to the R.101 at Beauvais, when that great pioneer Major-General Sir Sefton Brancker, and most of the leading airship specialists were burned to death, put paid to that form of transport.

In 1921 was held the official Government Air Exhibition at Olympia, the civil section of which, under my control, took up the whole of the galleries. King Alfonso XIII of Spain paid the Exhibition a visit and expressed gratification at what he saw.

I stayed in the Air Ministry for two years until May 1921, when, considering it a thankless task, I resigned my appointment.

* * * * *

The next three years I spent devilling for Mr. Lloyd George for his contemplated War Memoirs. He knew me very well as he saw me almost daily when I was

Assistant-Secretary to the War Cabinet Secretariat. And he knew that my work on the History of the Russo-Japanese War, had earned me the Chesney Gold Medal. No doubt this influenced him in asking me to help him with his reminiscences.

I was surprised and pleased by the offer, though in two minds about accepting it, for I thought it probable that he would expect me to write his book for him. However, I went down to Criccieth to discuss the matter with him, and it was agreed that I should take on the work in the first instance for a year and then, if mutually agreeable, continue for a further period.

He gave me a big room at the top of No. 11 Downing Street, where I started my researches with the aid of one of his former secretaries.

A few weeks later Mr. Baldwin gave me permission to work in the basement of No. 2 Whitehall Gardens—the Office of the War Cabinet, where all the confidential documents were stored. I found masses of official documents, including the Cabinet proceedings, many of which I had drawn up myself. Mr. Lloyd George had kept no diary and there was very little on record as to his views or the reasons for his actions. The official records of the War Cabinet proceedings were all ready to my hand but they were confidential.

Lord Beaverbrook kindly offered to let me see the notes he had been keeping for himself, and I went down for a week-end to Churkley Manor, his place in Sussex. We spent the morning in the large smoking-room looking at the deedbox of documents he had there. But we were frequently interrupted, for Mr. Bonar Law, who lived close by, was gravely ill. Three

times Lord Beaverbrook rang up to enquire, and with tears in his eyes then informed me that Bonar Law was nearing the end. He was deeply moved. I had not suspected this soft side to his character and was much impressed.

I paid a number of visits to Mr. Lloyd George's house at Churt and met many interesting people. I could, however, get very little assistance from the principal actor in the War. His heart was not in the job. It was during this period—the end of 1922—that the trouble occurred with Greece and Turkey, and there was much in the political world to absorb his attention. The immense popularity he had enjoyed during the War was on the wane.

Clearly the time was not ripe for leisured thinking and writing. That must await retirement from office. With this in mind, and with Mr. Lloyd George's concurrence, I became a candidate for the Chichele Chair of Military History at All Souls College, which I was lucky enough to get, and my path henceforth lay in Oxford.

CHAPTER VIII

BOWLER HAT

THE part played by me in the creation and launching of the Tanks was the direct cause of my entry into business. When I left the Air Ministry I ceased to be a government servant, and was free to seek fresh fields for my energies.

At that time M. André Citroën of the vast Citroën motor business was organizing a British company to develop and produce the caterpillar motor car designed by Alexandre Kegresse, a French mechanical engineer who had been employed by the last Czar of All the Russias, Nicholas II. To meet the Emperor's desire to make motor journeys in the snow he had designed a light half-track car with rubber tracks. This had proved so successful in Russia that it had been taken up and financed in France by Citroën—a man of remarkable vision and energy—who also formed a British company known as the Citroën-Kegresse Cars Ltd. For this a British director was required, and in 1922 Citroën invited me to join the Board of that company, of which I have been a director ever since. My colleagues on the Board were Dan Metz—Citroën's cousin—who was managing director, and Marcel Lourde—a Frenchman who so loved England, where he lived for many years, that he became more British than the British, and when he finally returned to his own country went in for one of our particular hobbies—the intensive cultivation of carnations. Thus began a most happy association which took me over regularly to France—a country I love—and brought

me into close contact with many Frenchmen, some of whom are among my best friends to-day.

The son of a Dutch father and a Polish mother, Citroën was born in France, and never learned his father's native tongue. He studied engineering at the *Ecole Polytechnique*, and became a reserve officer in the French army.

Ten years before the Great War he started a factory in Paris for a special type of gearing, the patent machines for which he obtained from Poland. It was doing well, but when the war broke out in 1914 he was immediately called to the colours.

The shortage of shells rapidly made itself felt and he offered to build a factory for the production of 10,000 75 m.m. shells a day. This was considered an impossibility, but by the end of the war he was employing 2,000 hands and turning out some 50,000 shells a day—and so became the pioneer of mass production in France. His shell factory was a model of its kind, and included a crèche, a dental surgery, and a canteen which was so good that it attracted visitors of every nationality, General Pershing himself being present at its opening.

While running his gearing business, Citroën had also taken an active interest in the manufacture of motor cars, and had been connected with the firm which produced the Mors—famous in its time, but now extinct. This experience gave him the idea of converting his shell factory into one for motor cars, and even during hostilities, with the permission of the French Government, he used a corner of the building for experimental work. Then when the war ended he produced the popular "10 Chevaux", and being

one of the first in the field, and backed by a first-class organization, its sales attained enormous figures.

It may be asked how a simple soldier could be of use to such an industrial colossus. Citroën's schemes were world-wide. My value to him lay in the innumerable contacts that my varied life had enabled me to make. I never remember being unable to arrange a meeting with anyone he wished to see from the Prince of Wales downwards. When he was planning his vast expeditions across Africa and Asia, this was of considerable use. I had access to almost every British Government department, thanks to the period I had spent in the War Cabinet Secretariat. Two successive British ambassadors in Paris were my personal friends. I knew many of the Governors in the British territories Citroën wished to traverse, in addition to outgoing and incoming Viceroys of India.

About this time Citroën was nearing the summit of his career and was one of the biggest industrialists in France. He thought in millions. His name was blazoned throughout the country and one of the most conspicuous sights of Paris was the illuminated Citroën on the Eiffel Tower at night. In fact in Paris it was difficult to get away from the name. In the Place de la Concorde was based the fleet of motor coaches he was the first to start. In the Champs Elysées was the great showroom with its immense window of one sheet of plate glass stretching from floor to ceiling: while on the Quai de Javel were the stupendous works which were the joy of his heart. How well I remember him proudly taking me round and pointing out the miniature railway he had had constructed. I can still see the alert little figure,

always in a bowler hat, whose eye missed nothing and who was a despot in his own kingdom.

Many are the tales that are told of him. In his heyday he visited the United States and was received by the great Henry Ford himself, who honoured him by conducting him in person to his holy of holies—the experimental workshop, usually barred to all visitors. Here Ford showed him the prototype of a revolutionary engine, the outstanding feature of which was air-cooling. Citroën inspected it minutely, and then, to the horror of the admiring engineers standing round, jerked out, “I think it is a dud, and I don’t believe you will ever sell one.” I did not hear the sequel, but so far as I know, no car with an engine of that description has been put on the market.

And while on the subject of Henry Ford, I am reminded that during a dinner at All Souls, when Lord Nuffield—then Sir William Morris—was my guest, I was puzzled by the fixed grin on the faces of the other Fellows during my talk. It transpired that I had been addressing my guest for most of the evening as “Mr. Ford”. He enjoyed the joke. I may add that I had just been entertaining Mr. Edsel Ford and his two sons, one of whom is now Henry Ford II.

Every year, during the Paris Motor Show, Citroën used to give a banquet to his agents and suppliers from all over the world. As the number of guests grew year by year, the Palais d’Orsay became too small. Then the Salle Bullier was chosen. Finally the gigantic factories at the Quai de Javel were utilized to accommodate the ever-increasing numbers, and some 6,000 sat down to table.

Citroën was an inveterate gambler and his *coups* at baccarat often ran into millions of francs. Lose or

win he always had a cheerful smile on his face. His business intimates used to be alarmed at the publicity given to his gambling, fearing its effect on his reputation as a business man. But to their remonstrances he had the irrefutable answer, "If I were not a gambler, I would not be where I am to-day." Indeed his gambling instincts were the cause of his being a pioneer in car production. He was the first in Europe to fit all-pressed-steel bodies as a standard and to adopt chain-assembly.

Before his death in 1935, a car was designed under his supervision which was considered ten years in advance of the times. To-day—fifteen years later—it is still finding a universal market.

But besides being a genius himself, Citroën had the power of collecting remarkable men around him, and one of the most outstanding was the explorer Georges-Marie Haardt. In the firm he came second and was reputed to be the only man to whom Citroën would ever listen. It is certain that he had great influence over his chief, and when away on the different journeys the lack of this influence was much felt.

Haardt was of Belgian parentage and was physically a fine specimen, of unusual height, and with great personal charm. He had a passion for all things English. He spoke the language extremely well and was always dressed by a London tailor. His position with the firm was guarantee of his business capabilities: but he was also exceedingly artistic, and in his flat overlooking the Tuileries Gardens everything had to be the last word in perfection. After his tragic death in Hong Kong in 1932, his study was taken in its entirety and placed, just as he had left it, in the

Citroën Museum in Paris, and there it remained until the *débâcle* of André Citroën himself.

Haardt was a perfect host, with a flair for organization and an eye for detail. I remember so well watching, with an English friend, from the balcony of his flat in Paris, Marshal Foch's funeral procession in 1929. There were some forty people there, but we were the only two British present. Every Allied country wished to pay honour to the great Frenchman, and each had sent a contingent of those who had fought under him. Slowly the long procession passed with its multiplicity of uniforms. The Prince of Wales was present, and Mr. Myron Herrick, the much loved American Ambassador to France. A detachment of the Coldstreams, with arms reversed, and with the Guard's band came past, marching in slow time to the sad notes of Chopin's Funeral March. There was a spontaneous gasp of admiration from our fellow onlookers. We were very proud. Further on, our troops wheeled into two long lines on the Place de la Concorde and in spite of the solemnity of the occasion, the French crowd could not forbear to cheer.

Georges-Marie Haardt was the leader of the comprehensive Citroën Central African Expedition known as the *Croisière Noire*, or Black Journey. His second-in-command was Louis Audouin-Dubreuil—a distinguished cavalry officer—whose cool judgment supplied the necessary ballast in difficult situations. Audouin-Dubreuil accompanied Haardt on all his expeditions and on the last took over the command on the death of his leader in 1932.

The Black Journey started towards the end of 1924, and more than 12,000 miles, chiefly of desert and

forest, were traversed by caterpillar motor car. The most exhaustive preparations were made beforehand, and I was able to help materially through our own Colonial Governors.

This African Expedition excited great interest in England, and on its successful conclusion a gala performance of the film of the Black Journey was given in London, which King George V and Queen Mary honoured with their presence.

André Citroën was not the man to rest upon his laurels and it was not long before he started making plans for a more ambitious project: none other than the crossing of Asia by caterpillar-track cars. Such a scheme involved immense preparation, covering as it did so many countries and legislating for such varied climates. It included crossing Russian territory. Three years went by before all obstacles were overcome and the necessary authorizations obtained. The Russians became now exasperatingly difficult and caused a considerable outcry in France by kidnapping a White Russian admiral. So far as I know his whereabouts were never discovered. The French decided to have nothing to do with the Soviet Government, cancelled the arrangements made and determined to avoid Russian territory and take the Expedition through India.

This French expedition was supported by the National Geographic Society of Washington, and sponsored by the British in so far as it crossed their territories.

I was happy to be able to assist Haardt with introductions in London, Paris and India. The India Office was instrumental in placing the services of the late Colonel Sir Vivian Gabriel at the disposal of the

Expedition. An ex-Indian Civil servant, who had organized the *Durbar* for King George V in 1912, he had unrivalled knowledge of India and her peoples. He it was who arranged for the triumphal entry at Landi Kotal Fort, when the French party were played into India by the Indian pipers—a gesture which greatly appealed to the leader's artistic soul.

I myself had arranged an interview for Haardt in Paris with the returning Viceroy, Lord Irwin, who promised him every help, and with his successor, Lord Willingdon, in London.

And so after repeated setbacks, finally in March, 1931, the expedition was ready to set out. It comprised a truly remarkable collection of men—each a specialist in his own line. Most of them were known to me personally. Among them was Alexandre Jacovleff, the brilliant Russian artist; Joseph Hackin, the distinguished curator of the Musée Guimet, who, with his young wife, lost his life so tragically, being torpedoed off the coast of Africa when on a special mission for General de Gaulle. Very early in the war he had made his way back from Afghanistan to join the Free French in Britain. Then there was W. Petro Pavlovsky (generally known as Petro) whom I am proud to call my friend, son of a Russian father and French mother, and now a naturalized British subject and an ex-Major R.E. In most romantic circumstances, on the arrival of the Expedition in Peking, he married Barbara Schurman, the charming daughter of the American Ambassador to China. Petro had lived for years in that country, but from time to time felt impelled to return to Europe when he considered himself in danger of becoming too Chinese. A man of extraordinary versatility and speaking many languages,

his adventures rivalled those of Dick Barton. He was taken prisoner by the Japanese in Hong Kong in 1942, but escaped and turned up in India. Then he went to Washington and later to London, where he joined the Intelligence Corps. He was parachuted into Yugoslavia just before we switched over from Mihailovitch to Tito, and became "forgotten". But after many adventures he managed to get out alive and finished up the war in South-East Asia. He is now back in Hong Kong.

Dr. Owen Maynard Williams, whose beautiful photographs were reproduced in the *National Geographic Magazine*, was another outstanding member of the team.

Shortly before the Expedition set out Haardt gave a farewell dinner in London to a handful of friends, of whom I was one, and we all made a promise to meet on a given date. I gave him as a parting gift a lucky bean enclosed in a silver box which I had had specially made. He carried it with him. But it did not bring him luck.

I never saw him again, for he died in Hong Kong just as he had attained his goal. My next contact with him was a spell of duty in the *chapelle ardente* erected in the courtyard of his flat in Paris, where his body lay in state on return from the Far East. I followed it—one of a vast concourse from all the Citroën Works—when he was laid to rest in the cemetery at Passy.

A great welcome was arranged in the Sorbonne for the survivors of the Expedition at the end of 1932. The President of the Republic, M. Albert Lebrun, Marshal Pétain and Marshal Franchet d'Esperey, General Weygand and General Gouraud, the popular

one-armed Governor of Paris, and many other notables were there to do them honour. I had gone over to Paris specially for the occasion and was assigned a seat on the platform next to General Gouraud. But I never reached it, and, in company with several members of the Expedition, failed even to get into the building. It came about in this way. The French Geographical Society was entrusted with the task of issuing the invitations. Not realizing the immense interest taken by the public in the venture, and accustomed to a half-filled hall, they had sent out three times as many tickets as there were places. The result was a pushing, jostling crowd round the Sorbonne, and hundreds were unable to get near the Salle. The explorers themselves had the greatest difficulty in getting through.

My pleas to the commissionaires that I was a personal friend of Citroën's and a director of the Company evoked the reply, "We have heard that tale before". So I remained outside with the crowd, who maintained a uniform cheerfulness, chanting: "*Vive Renault, vive Renault : à bas Citroën ! c'est pour ça que nous avons pris la Bastille !*"

And with this good-natured banter ringing in my ears, I went off to collect some friends and dance far into the night.

The *Croisière Jaune*—as the Central Asian Expedition came to be called—was a source of much publicity, and a great gala evening at the Opera was arranged for the first presentation of the film of the Expedition. The President of the Republic, the Prime Minister (M. Gaston Doumergue) and all the élite of Paris attended. In a box was Georges-Marie Haardt's little son, aged seven. The film had been taken by

André Sauvage and produced by Léon Poirier. Apart from its interest, it was an artistic success.

Georges Lefèvres had written a graphic story of the Expedition in a book entitled *La Croisière Jaune*. Citroën now asked me if I would undertake the translation of this into English. As my work at Oxford left me plenty of leisure I consented and it appeared successfully under the title of *An Eastern Odyssey*. I enjoyed doing it, for it brought me into collaboration with Petro and renewed touch with other members of the Expedition. Petro and his wife had a flair for collecting interesting people round them, and I spent many happy hours at their home in Paris.

Later, I was prevailed on by Citroën to undertake the English version of the film to be presented in London at a gala performance in aid of the National Lifeboat Institution before the Prince of Wales. This entailed considerably more work than I had contemplated.

André Citroën had fallen on evil days. With the death of Haardt his lucky star seemed to have deserted him. Money was short and it was extremely difficult to make headway in any direction. Poirier was immersed in another film and it was hard to nail him down to the changes necessary for the English version—*An Eastern Odyssey*. The whole of the script had to be spoken in English. I was lucky to get an ex-civil servant, living in France, with a perfect command of the French language—the late U. F. Wintour—to undertake the rôle of speaker.

However, all difficulties were surmounted and the film was completed two days before the gala presentation. Citroën himself was too ill to attend and his

place was taken by Audouin-Dubreuil, co-leader of the Expedition, who received the Prince of Wales.

Citroën was now fighting grievous illness. He was in serious financial difficulties, but such was his hatred of any form of control that he refused offers of help from the French Government, his agents and his suppliers, preferring to go bankrupt rather than suffer any supervision of his finances. He had one more gamble with chance. He launched prematurely the front-wheel-drive tractor, which has since had such a success. This was his swan-song and he retired into a nursing home to die.

Once more I went into the great hall of the Quai de Javel, where he lay in state, and I followed him to his last resting place. The two men with whom I had had such close contact lay now one in the cemetery at Passy, the other at Montparnasse.

My connection, however, with the company was not to cease. The new proprietors, MM. Michelin & Cie., asked me to continue my directorship, which I have done ever since in the happiest collaboration. The war put an end to my visits to France, but I have kept in touch with that country through my friends and colleagues M. du Roure and M. Louis Garbe.

CHAPTER IX

A REVELATION

IN the late summer of 1936, that is three years after Hitler had seized power, I was, to my surprise, informally sounded as to whether I would accept an invitation from the German National-Socialist Government, to attend as a guest of honour, the annual *Reichsparteitag*, the Nazi Party Congress and Festival, at Nuremberg, from the 8th to the 14th September.

I had not followed as closely as I should have the changes in Germany since the Great War, and what little I had gathered of her leading personalities had not inspired confidence. Though I was flattered, I wondered if there might not be some "catch" in it and whether my august presence might not be exploited for propaganda purposes. On learning, however, that I should not be called upon to speak, and that a number of prominent, or would-be prominent, British men and women, some of whom I knew, had accepted invitations, my doubts were allayed.

As I have already mentioned, I had occasionally been to Germany and knew something of the former German mentality, and could speak a little of the language. In 1884 I had spent a couple of months with a German family in Bonn; as a young officer I had made a tour of the battlefields of the Franco-German War, and some years later had attended the Kaiser Manoeuvres in Minden. In 1911, I had been an official umpire for the Prince Henry motor tour, during which, after close contact with different types of Germans, I realized that they were much more excitable, unscrupulous and ill-mannered than I had up till

then realized. There followed the four war years 1914—1918. I would therefore not be an entire stranger to my hosts, and I was curious to see how in 1936, under the domination of an ex-Austrian paper-hanger, they differed from the people I had known under the rule of the "All Highest".

In due course a formal invitation reached me, with official programme, maps, and passes for the functions of the week. Everything had been meticulously thought out. Last, but not least, a return ticket to Nuremberg was to be obtained for a single fare. That settled it! I accepted; renewed my passport; and on the 6th boarded the night train at Victoria.

So soon as we had crossed the German frontier everything in the garden was lovely. The Customs officers and railway officials saluted in every direction at once. They did not trouble to examine my baggage. The word had gone round; and it was roses, roses all the way for the *Ehrengäste*. Between Frankfurt and Nuremberg the train was packed with town and country folk, with their families, going to the Congress. Everybody was in festive mood, and there was a general atmosphere of what the late Lord Curzon was wont to speak of as a "Be-anō". In spite of all one had heard of the food shortage and poor physical condition of the nation, brought about by the blockade during and after the war, all those I saw on the train and later seemed to be in astonishingly good fettle. If not as gross as they used to be, they appeared healthy and tough. What struck me most was their unabashed puslfulness, and the numbers of healthy, well-fed children.

I reached Nuremberg on the 7th. The appointed rendezvous for the international guests was the annexe of the Grand Hotel, which had been specially built



Cover of invitation to Hitler's Reichsparteitag
Nürnberg, 1936

for the recipients of Government hospitality. With proverbial German precision this luxurious building had been completed only that very day, and was not available for guests until the following morning, when the Congress officially opened. But the possibility of early arrivals had not been over-looked, and arrangements had been made to cater for them and also any extra guests, for whom there might not be room in the annexe. After identification and a cordial reception at the hotel, I and some other early comers were whisked off in waiting cars to "Mitropadorf". This was a large railway goods yard, which had been cleaned up and garnished with Venetian masts and much bunting. On the fan of sidings were marshalled four complete trains made up of brand new sleeping cars of the "*Mitropa*"—the Central European Sleeping Car Service—resplendent in glistening maroon enamel and chromium plate. Each train included a restaurant car ; and each of them had a lavatory chalet containing every sort of bath, and complete with hair-dressing, pedicure and manicure cabinets and toilet equipment down to nail scissors. On all sides were smiling attendants in spotless white uniforms.

I describe these arrangements somewhat fully because their perfection, down to the utmost detail, was striking, even to myself, who knew something of Teutonic thoroughness. The organization was almost sinister in its super-efficiency. There was no casualness, no forgetfulness, no lack of pains or imagination, no muddling through.

Next morning I was taken back to the hotel annexe and shown to my suite. One feature—rather a curse—of all the guests' rooms, was a loudspeaker. This could be tuned in only to Nuremberg. Loudspeakers

were installed at many street corners and, except by retiring to one's room and switching off, there was no escape from the fervour, almost frenzy, reigning in the city. It was Party sentiment on top of patriotism whipped up till it amounted to mass hysteria. In the strident tones of the numerous leaders occurred over and over again the words *Reich*, *Bolchevismus*, *Judenthum*, in stupefying reiteration. With the speeches alternated the crash of very martial music.

There were over 200 guests from various nations. I do not think that there were any French. The British contingent included Members of Parliament, ex-M.P.s, ex-naval and military officers, one or two Peers, and many representatives of both sexes of that "get together" busybody type of person who exudes international goodwill, mutual understanding, brotherly love—and appeasement. I do not describe the various functions at which we were present, but merely sketch the effect on myself of the whole week.

There were mass meetings in large halls and huge parades on the Zeppelin Field and stadium, of SS. men, the Hitler Youth, the Brown Shirts, the *Reichswehr* and the *Arbeitsdienst*. All were impressive. But to me the most striking was the parade of 45,000 youths of the *Arbeitsdienst* out of a total of 250,000 in Germany. These husky, tough youths had not been put through any military training. Of course not! And they were unarmed. But they all carried burnished spades, and the front rank of 1,500 were naked to the waist—to show the connection between German youth and the soil. But, though untrained, it was noticeable that this huge mass moved with the precision of a battalion of Guards. Some of these youths must have started from their camps round Nuremberg about 5 a.m. At 5 p.m.

they were striding through the city after the parade, twelve abreast, with oak leaves and flowers in their caps, singing lustily. The cobbled streets rang under their iron-shod boots, and the old houses seemed to tremble. Potential *Kannonenfutter* in immense quantity. In quality raw, perhaps; but not so raw! They were tough and disciplined.

As I have said, we were all treated with the utmost courtesy, every arrangement having been made for our convenience and comfort. We were conveyed by car or char-a-banc to all functions. It was truly *kolossal*, and impressive. But why? Why all this? I confess I was cynical. Was it not in motive a repetition, on a grander and international scale, of the *Prinz Heinrich Automobil-Fahrt* of twenty-five years previously? A mass rapprochement by order. But, again, what for?

Naturally, we foreigners had been invited so that we might see with our own eyes what the National Socialist Party under Hitler had achieved, and have our sympathies enlisted in the ostensible object and ideals of the whole Nazi movement—of which we could convey a favourable impression on return to our respective homes. If any discrimination was shown in favour of the representatives of any one nation, it was to five or six Italians. Though not all soldiers, they were all in black uniform. Whenever possible, they gathered in a group as close to the Führer as they could, and posed, chests and blue chins well out, for every Press photographer. They did not mingle with the other guests, and, in spite of the then outward friendliness between the Nazis and Fascists, there was not much cordiality between the two here. The Italians were obviously not beloved by their hosts. On one occasion, at a big parade, I was surprised when

one of the English-speaking Nazi Foreign Office officials who were deputed to look after us British, pointed to the Italians clustered together on the steps of the Stadium, and whispered in English: "Look at those bloody ice-creamers". He obviously knew our language. It was subsequent experience of the value of the "ice-creamers" on the field of battle that in part led to their shameful treatment by the *Reichswehr* in North Africa, and later.

A striking feature of the proceedings was the hatred and contempt of the Jews, Russians and Communists openly expressed in the most violent terms in the official broadcasts. How much the fear of the Soviet Government and the infection of communistic ideology was genuine and how much suggestion, to scare and draw the people together, I could not decide. But to us British, perhaps too polite and too addicted to understatement, the hysterical propaganda was overdone, in bad taste and unconvincing. We now know more.

In the light of what has happened since 1945 I am not sure that Hitler was not correct in his estimate of both Russians and Jews, though his bestial methods against the latter are on any grounds indefensible. In September 1936, it appeared from our conversations with the Germans taking care of us, that their chief grievance was due to the supposition that the Russians had financed the construction of a large number of aerodromes in Czecho-Slovak territory within short air-range of Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig, Breslau and other large centres in Eastern Germany. This, coming on top of the geographically salient position of Czecho-Slovakia, was a strategic dagger pointed at the heart of the Reich. Such was the tale told to us and to the German people.

According to local report, the normal population of Nuremberg of some 400,000 people was at this time swollen by an influx of 600,000 visitors. A large part of the latter was composed of the different military and quasi-military organizations which were billeted in the city or encamped in the outskirts. At all times between the great show parades the main streets were crowded by men in some sort of uniform, black shirts and others.

The continual saluting and "heiling", at first amusing, soon grew tiresome; but its ludicrous side did not strike the Nazis, who were always perfectly solemn in their performance of these rites. Even the lavatory attendant at the hotel proffered a clean towel with hand up and a "Heil Hitler".

The Abyssinians were then very much in the news, and one day, as I sat down at my lunch table, of British guests, I light-heartedly held up my hand, with the words "Heil Selassie"! When I observed the dirty looks directed towards me from the adjacent tables I quickly slid into a seat and lost myself. There are times when discretion is the better part.

My knowledge of colloquial German was just sufficient to enable me to break away from the banal after-dinner chit-chat in the hotel lounge and wander among the crowds—a Haroun al Raschid prowling round the bazaars of Baghdad. At one *Bierhalle* I sat at the same table as two grizzled men in storm-trooper uniform, each of whom might well have been a Teutonic Barlasch of the Guard. At first they were unresponsive to my overtures, but when it came out that all three of us had been at Ypres in November 1914, they thawed. They were both rather cynical veterans of the old Kaiser's Army and had belonged

to the "Maikäfer" (Cockchafers, the crack Jäger Regiment of the Guards). Over drinks—for which I paid—we had a "matey", if halting, chinwag about old times. It was a remarkable example of the free-masonry of the fighting man.

The last full-dress spectacle was a parade of some 30,000 of the *Wehrmacht*. In this, every type of ground force took part, including a mass of mechanized transport and tanks. But the latter were not of a modern type. There followed a sham fight, in which infantry, mechanized machine-gun carriers, tanks and low-flying aeroplanes took part in a combined hurricane attack—a forerunner of the smashing of Poland in 1939 and of the advance into France in May, 1940. A Zeppelin drifted up at the finale and curtsied in the air, in a farewell salute to the Führer. The Show was over.

I had never been to Vienna. Now, when I was so near, it seemed an excellent opportunity for a visit, and I decided to go by train to Linz and on by boat down the Danube. This unpremeditated extension of my journey necessitated borrowing a few pounds from two of my trusting co-guests. But this increased the amount of sterling in my possession beyond the sum I had declared on entering the Reich, and caused a fresh complication, necessitating hurried visits to "offices". After a full explanation of exactly how I had come into possession of this sudden accretion in wealth, I received a permit allowing me to take more English money out of Germany than I had brought in. The fact that I was an *Ehrengast* helped.

On arriving at Passau, on the frontier, I had again to disclose the extent of my wealth and to hand over all my German money except ten Reichsmarks, in

exchange for a receipt, for which I was told I should receive back the equivalent in sterling in London. (This I duly did, less a small commission.) Whilst we waited for these exchange formalities another train came in from the West. Out of it poured some 300 youthful Brown Shirts returning from the *Parteitag*. They fell in on the long platform and after some rasping words of command marched off behind a band. Once again, the *Paradeschritt*; and, as during the past week, the air pulsated with "the tramp of thousands", though there were not thousands and they were not armed. The tense atmosphere of preparation, expectation, and hysteria in which I had been living was re-created here on the platform of this small frontier station.

Meanwhile, a fresh engine had backed to the head of our train, a monster such as I had not seen since 1918 in the U.S.A. On the foot-plate stood the driver, a genial looking man wiping his hands on a piece of waste. As he wore no self-conscious air of truculent patriotism and efficiency, I thought he was probably an Austrian, and I felt that it might be a relief to chat with him. I was interested in machinery, and so, in halting German, I tackled him on what promised to be his soft side—his engine. He at once rose. He was proud of his "bus". She was one of a class which was the heaviest and most powerful in Europe; but, unluckily, the permanent way on the section between Passau and Vienna had not originally been constructed to carry such heavy rolling-stock at speed, and he could not put her through her paces. I was sorry. The guard's whistle sounded. *Einsteigen!* "Are you a German?" I asked. "Nein!" was the indignant reply. "Gott sei Dank!" said I, as I slipped

him a German cigar—and boarded the train. This *gemütlich* fellow had been a bromide and had brought me back to normality.

On the next stretch of the journey, to Linz, we certainly did not exceed the speed limit, and I had ample time to analyse the surface impressions of my visit. The super-organization of the National Socialist Party had not come as a surprise to me. But beyond that, the frenetic worship of the Führer, shown by the enormous crowds at the different parades and whenever he passed through the streets, standing in an open car, right arm up in salute, escorted by half a dozen SS. motor cyclists, was a revelation. After the awful depression into which the German nation had been plunged during the 1930's the people had been looking and hoping for a saviour. What Hitler had achieved in curing the unemployment and distress by his "Guns not butter" programme had been canalized by the hypnotic power of this demagogue, and the propaganda of Goebbels, on himself. Here was the hoped-for Messiah. And by the bulk of the population the salutation, "Heil", was spoken almost religiously.

To me his hypnotic power over his own people suggested that of the snake-charmer with his gourd pipe. It was there all right, but confined to his countrymen. Neither I nor most of the other British guests came under its baleful influence.

As a great favour, about a dozen of us were received by Hitler at his hotel, and invited to ask questions. He was dressed in his customary plain, semi-military khaki tunic, and wore no decorations. He was friendly, polite, and, to my surprise, attractive. He had a fresh complexion, blue eyes and a pleasing smile. He spoke

very quickly in a hoarse voice—which we all later got to know on the radio—and was interpreted by the inevitable Herr Doktor Schmidt. In reply to a question he would start speaking slowly in a low tone, but as he proceeded he got worked up, talked faster and faster, and louder and more harshly, as if he were haranguing a large audience in a vast hall. We were, in fact, in an ordinary hotel reception room.

Three times Dr. Schmidt touched him on the shoulder and told him that he was going too fast. On each occasion Hitler patted the *doktor* on the back, smiled and promised to be good and go slower. But it was of no use. After a few words he was again carried away by his own verbosity and began ranting. The curious thing was that he did not seem to realize that he was not addressing a crowd of fervent disciples, but a few critical foreigners. Not only did he lie. He knew he was lying, and knew that we knew he was lying. But that did not stop him. As an example, on the point of the return to Germany of her captured colonies he admitted that she did want them back, not as a matter of prestige, but as a matter of *der Magen*—the belly. Unluckily for him, there were one or two economists among us who knew that the amount of raw materials that Germany had imported from her colonies in peace-time was infinitesimal, and they said so. To this he gave no answer. As always, he had on this occasion his pet bunch of thugs—Goering, Himmler, Goebbels, Ribbentrop, etc., round him. I was introduced to Ribbentrop, who was just going to London as Ambassador. I had hardly heard of him before but took an instinctive dislike to him, with his malignant, flaccid, pale face and fishy expression. I also conversed with Hess. With dark smouldering

eyes in cavernous sockets, he looked more intellectual, but more of a fanatic than the rest of the gang.

Another of the Nazi hierarchy whom I met personally was the infamous Hans Frank—the “Butcher of Poland”—whose name headed the list of 3,000 war criminals made out during the war by the Polish Government. Little did I guess that the fat greedy man who sat next me at a supper given to some of us honoured guests would in ten years’ time go to the gallows. He was most repellent, and so obviously the bully, that I assumed that he was a Prussian until he told me he was a high legal luminary in Bavaria. He spoke good English—of a sort.

What intrigued me was that, beyond his food and drink, the only subject he was interested in was *India*. He could not keep off it and plied me with questions—the population of India, the number of British in India, the size of the British Army in that country, etc., etc. I have since wondered whether he was destined, after Poland, to be Governor-General of a German India? The diary in many volumes, which he handed over to the Allies, may have thrown light on this.

Blomberg, to look at, was the most attractive of all the German leaders present. Very smart in his well-cut grey uniform, he presented a great contrast to all the other Nazis. At the parade of the *Wehrmacht*, as he stood alone, erect, slim and silent on a small dais just below and in front of the Führer, he presented a striking contrast to his blatant and less dignified chief.

I knew nothing of the relations between the two men—the leader of the State and the leader of the most powerful part of the State—or of the intrigues and jealousy between the Nazi Party and the *Wehrmacht*, such as have since been revealed. But I remembered

what two French staff officers of the *Deuxième Bureau* had told me at lunch in Paris in the previous year. Their theory was that the German General Staff and the big industrialists had placed Hitler in power as a demagogic stooge who could sway the mass of the people, and so ensure the strengthening of the Nazis, and then be put aside, but that they were even then (1935) beginning to find that the servant was becoming the master. I recalled this when I saw the two men on parade together facing many thousands of their countrymen.

* * * * *

And so to Linz—close to the birth-place of Hitler—where I spent the night. It was a sad town, which gave me a first glance of Austria's faded, down-at-heel appearance. Next morning I took the boat down the Danube to Vienna. So much has been written about the plight of the once gay Imperial capital, as it was left high and dry by the First World War, that I cannot add anything. The city, which almost coincided with the truncated Austrian Empire, had “Ichabod” written large all over it. It aroused sympathy and inspired sorrow. Yet, in spite of their grievous plight, and depressed and subdued as they were, the Viennese were friendly, if no longer gay. I became the regular tourist, and visited Schönbrunn and all the near-by sights. I also had luncheon at the Embassy with our Ambassador, Sir Walford Selby, to meet his American colleague, both of whom were interested to hear my impressions of Nuremberg.

After three days, with a trifling amount of Austrian money, my return ticket and ten German Reichsmarks in my pocket, I took the train for Ostend and home.

I was curious to discover how I should fare with so little cash. No restaurant car for me. For lunch, at Linz, I bought from a decrepit old dame, who was hawking light refreshments, a split ham roll and some grapes. I could not eat all the latter and offered some to the old lady, and there, standing together on the low platform, we plucked grapes alternately from my bunch. This intrigued my fellow-travellers. As one of them, an Indian, passed, I spoke to him. He was a Cambridge undergraduate studying philosophy, and willingly joined in our meal. Heads now appeared at carriage windows. I suppose it was rather an unusual sight—that of an old fruit hawker, a native of India and an Englishman standing cheek by jowl, eating grapes and spitting out the skins!

After we passed the German frontier everything tautened up and became less "matey", and by the time we arrived at Nuremberg, where I had to change trains, we were well in the backwash and the still tense atmosphere of the recent Congress.

During the night journey to Ostend I was able to "job backwards" again and ruminate further on what I had learned on my trip. As regards the Germans, my feeling was a mixture of admiration, repulsion and fear. I admired their tremendous efficiency, industry, physical toughness and discipline, and their spirit of self-sacrifice for the Cause, whether the cause were in fact righteous or not. In a measure I admire a successful burglar. I was revolted by the bestiality of the way in which they were even then carrying out their policy against their own people and the Jews, and critical of the crudity of their propaganda methods.

And I dreaded what this docile robot monster of over 80 millions, maddened by previous failure and

racial pride, hypnotized by the mass suggestion of its leaders, and animated by a common determination to reverse its failure in 1918 and win by any means the hegemony of Europe, might do. The worship of the demagogues, who had pulled the nation together and brought it back from the brink of the abyss, was not simulated.

In September 1936, Germany was almost tuned up to concert pitch and all dressed up. But where was she going? To this there then seemed to me two obvious answers. The first was that she was eventually going to make war on Russia, whose growing strength she feared, and rightly; the second that she did not want war against us at the moment. We were, until the right time came, to be appeased, chloroformed and lulled to a deeper sleep, until she was ready. As we now know, she was not quite ready even by September 1939, still less was this the case in September 1936.

The possible effect of the impact of this solid mass of human beings, whose entire interest, activities and scheme of life seemed bound up in aggression and conquest, was alarming. At the time the German propaganda machine was directed full blast against the Soviet Republic, Communism and Jewry, and not at all against us. Indeed, the feeling towards us was ultra-friendly. The Nazis wanted, at least temporarily, to win our good-will and support. But for how long?

The idea of our allying ourselves with our "good cousins"—which was the policy urged by some of our pacifists—was to me terrifying. The Germans had been through a harder school than we had. They were more ruthless, more purposeful, more industrious, more capable of thinking out and pursuing a long-

term national policy—and fundamentally *jealous* of us. They were envious of the position we had won in the world. Any close association of the two nations suggested to me *Aesop's fable* of the brass and earthenware pots floating together down stream. At each bump it was the softer, weaker vessel that suffered, until it was entirely smashed. In the event of any understanding between the Germans and ourselves, how long would it be before they felt themselves strong enough to turn on us and call us to stand and deliver? Only up to the moment when they felt they could do without our friendship and backing. Then we should play the part of the young lady of Riga.

At Nuremberg I was not so much impressed by the *Reichswehr*—good though it was—as I was by the thousands of Nazi youth of both sexes being inoculated with the idea of war—and physically hardened to wage it. What would that mean during the next ten years. The Germans had been the apostles of force right down from the days of Tacitus, and their defeat in the Great War in 1918 had no more caused them to change their spirit, or their spots, than had the débâcle of Jena a hundred and twelve years earlier.

Ever since the treaty of Versailles they had, tongue in cheek, squealed and appealed to the world and high Heaven about its iniquity. But in reality, its terms did not compare for severity with those enforced by them upon the Russians at Brest-Litovsk, and upon the Rumanians at Bucharest. I had at the back of my mind, also, the terms which, according to report, were to have been enforced on us; had we lost the war.

On my return in chastened mood from the resurgent Fatherland of 1936 these matters preoccupied me. We had been allowed to live in a fool's paradise since

the Armistice. I recalled the activities of the misguided League of Nations Union, the Peace Ballot, the motion of the Oxford Union, and the wide-spread appeal of the Pacifists and Defeatists, always more vocal than those who hold other views, culminating in the idiocy of the Plea for Disarmament by Example made by Lord Ponsonby at Oxford.

From the English papers I had seen when in Nuremberg I gathered that the people at home did not, even then, realize the implications of the Nazi movement, and did not take it sufficiently seriously. *The Times* certainly did not. Back in Oxford I mentioned this to the Editor, Geoffrey Dawson, a Fellow of my College, who had two correspondents at Nuremberg. I also offered to report my impressions to the Director of Military Intelligence at the War Office, but met with no welcome or response.

My suspicions as to the motive behind the invitations to the Congress were confirmed by letters from one of our assiduous SS. bear-leaders, who had pressed me to join some Nazi-sponsored Swedish Association for the promotion of International good relations. I did not join. It was stupid of me. Had I done so I might have learned something.

My anxiety was accentuated when I looked round at home and compared the physique and general slackness of so many of our young men with that of the 45,000 *Arbeitsdienst* youths I had seen swinging joyfully through the streets of Nuremberg. Which nation was doing the best for itself and its youth? Were national effort and discipline such bad things after all? How long, to avoid unpopularity, would our so-called leaders truckle to the supposed national horror of the word "conscription", boggle at the necessity for

some form of national training and discipline, and fail to face facts and tell the nation the unpleasant truth? One leader had not so failed—Winston Churchill.

It was in a subdued and foreboding frame of mind that I returned. I had thoughts of expressing my fears in the Press and warning my countrymen. But in face of the general apathy acquiesced in, if not fostered, by the Government, I hesitated to do so. Even if my words were printed they would not carry sufficient weight to influence public opinion. It was not long before I regretted my omission to take such positive action.

FROM DUG-OUT TO DON

“**W**HAT’s that damned duck doing up there ?” I enquired, pointing to the effigy in the niche in the wall facing me. As always happens at such awkward moments, there was a lull in the conversation of those at lunch, and under the vaulted roof of the Buttery of All Souls College my voice rang out like a bassoon solo. A shocked silence followed—a fit subject for a Bateman picture: “the Fellow who called the ‘Mallard’ a damned duck”. The ensuing burst of irrelevant conversation was a kindly effort to cover the unfortunate lapse of their new colleague.

To convey the poignancy of the incident to those who do not know intimately the University of Oxford, it should be explained that the aforesaid effigy is of the “Swapping Mallard”—the legendary bird found in the clay when the foundations of the chapel of All Souls were being dug in the year 1438. It has been wittily described as a “*malade imaginaire*”, and it is the College’s almost sacred totem. My lapse, however, was condoned as being due to the *naïveté* and ignorance of the soldier; and my status as a *plenus socius* of the College—an honour to which I had been elected a short time previously—remained unshaken.

I must explain how I came to be in such company. In the spring of 1925, when I was in my third year of working for Lloyd George, the late Lieutenant-Colonel Whitton, who had been my assistant in the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, wrote and asked me whether, if he applied for the post of

Chichele Professor of Military History at Oxford, applications for which had been invited, he might give my name as a reference. I had not seen the notice in *The Times*, and knew nothing about the Chair beyond the name of its then occupant, Professor Spenser Wilkinson. Whitton would, in my opinion, have filled the post admirably, and I replied that he could certainly give my name.

Shortly afterwards, some of my friends suggested that I should apply for the job myself, and gave me some information about it, pointing out its many advantages. Among these friends were Lord Hankey, who held the triple position of Secretary of the Cabinet, Clerk of the Privy Council, and Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence; and Sir James Edmonds, responsible for the Official History of the War of 1914–1918 on the Western Front. As my recent duties had included a year as “Eyewitness” at G.H.Q., B.E.F.; three years in charge of the Historical Section of the C.I.D., compiling the Official Naval and Military History of the Russo-Japanese War; and three years devilling for Lloyd George’s *War Memoirs*, I was not anxious to take on work of a somewhat similar nature. Moreover, I had no desire to become a professor.

But the arguments of my friends won the day; and, with some diffidence, with Whitton’s knowledge and the concurrence of L.G., I submitted my application. It was a post-entry made on the last possible day, and after sending it in I began to have qualms as to whether I was really fitted for the position. The fact that a Chichele Chair automatically implied a Fellowship of All Souls conveyed nothing to me. I had only heard of the College, and did not know what a Fellowship meant. Just as I was thinking of cancelling my appli-

cation I received a letter from Edmonds telling me that he guessed what was in my mind and warning me not to be such a fool as to withdraw my name. I did not.

To be honest, having decided to go for the job, I was determined to do it thoroughly, and to bring up all the heavy artillery I could as references. Among the big guns were Mr. Asquith and Mr. Baldwin. I could have had a second ex-Prime Minister in Mr. Lloyd George, but I did not wish to overdo things, and was not certain whether L.G.'s name would have been a recommendation at Oxford.

I had the good fortune to be elected; and was delighted. The deliberations of the Board of Electors are not divulged; but I believe that the fact that I had won the Chesney Gold Medal of the Royal United Service Institution for my work on the Official History of the Russo-Japanese War, and was the author of a collection of war stories published in 1909 under the title of *The Green Curve*, and the further fact that I was not a graduate of the Staff College, and therefore not so likely to be a hard-boiled military doctrinaire soldier, carried some weight. It happened that all my rivals, including four Generals and a Colonel, were graduates of the Staff College, two of them having served as instructors there, whereas I was, so to speak, a comparatively uncultured officer, who could not add the magic letters P.S.C. to his name.

And so I became a don and, more than that, a member of that most distinguished circle, All Souls College. I employ this adjective advisedly and deliberately, and I would add to it "catholic", for I came in a stranger to the College and all it meant, and was at once treated as one of the fraternity. It is a happy band of brothers.

Before I actually "came up" I knew little about the University. I had, of course, met Oxford men, read *Verdant Green* and *Tom Brown at Oxford*, and had paid two visits to the University. The first of these was in 1889 when, as a young officer, I stayed a couple of nights in Keble College with an old school pal. Having been at five schools, I found many friends. But I was in an entirely strange *milieu*. My recollection of it is now rather blurred. My host was a popular Rugger Blue, which meant a succession of heavy meals called breakfasts, usually ending with that bastard confection, a sweet omelette, and wine parties, which anywhere else would have been termed dinners.

This same pal had later been my guest for a long week-end in Barracks at Chatham. He was no recluse, yet we found him in some ways strangely naïf. When challenged by the sentry on the barrack gate, with the cry of "'alt! oo goes there?", he had genially replied: "Oh, how are you?", and proffered his hand. My next visit, nineteen years later, was in quest of young officers for the Tanks.

I did not have to assume my new duties until October. In the interval I visited Oxford to be admitted as a Fellow of my College. I started my academic career by appearing in a top hat and tail-coat—formal attire, in my opinion called for by the dignity of the occasion, but which, as I found, was customary only for a few heads of colleges. After a brief ceremony, I was admitted as a *verus atque plenus socius*, and was conducted round the College by the Dean, Doctor Edgeworth, a charming and very learned don, but one from whom it was difficult to extract precise directions. On visiting the smoking room, I was amused to hear that for a long time Fellows

would not allow it to be called such, and it was known as "Mr. A's Room".

The Registrar had informed me of the date on which I had to take up my duties, and warned me that I had to deliver an inaugural lecture. The word "inaugural" to me meant only one thing, and I spent three months preparing this oration. On the 10th October I duly "proceeded" (military jargon) to Oxford to report at headquarters. Still the only University authority I knew was the Registrar. I greeted him: "All present and correct, sir. I have come to report my arrival." With amusement, for he also had "served", he replied, "Oh, you don't have to do that here." But I was not going to be put off with any slipshod methods. "I must report to someone. And here," I continued, bringing a bulky typescript out of my pocket, "is my inaugural lecture." The Registrar was still more amused. "There was no need for you to bring that with you." "But don't I deliver it to-morrow morning?" "No, you can do it this term, or next, or at any time within a year or so." I could not but feel disappointed. Why call it inaugural? I was comforted by the thought that the hours I had spent had not been wasted. I delivered it some six months later.

As I left for London the college porter, an ex-sergeant of infantry, congratulated me on my appointment, and added in a confidential whisper, "You've got a good job, sir. Don't you lose it." This was a kindly hint from one old soldier—the babe who had been in the wood some time—to another just entering it. I found that in many of the colleges the responsible position of porter—which calls for a good deal of tact mixed with firmness—was held by an ex-Service man.

My inaugural lecture was not, I gathered, quite what was expected. Called "The Study of War", it dealt more with the nature of war, and with its incidence, than with its strictly historical aspect. To the historian *pur sang* my views on what I regarded as almost the most important part of warfare, namely its psychological side, were irrelevant. I was, even then, immensely impressed by the possibilities in this direction rendered practicable by the two new agencies—the radio and the cinema. And, ever since the Armistice, I had felt that war of this type (we now call it "cold" warfare) was being continuously waged, principally by the Soviet Government, which, by means of fifth columns, agents, propaganda and "cells", had, so far back as 1925, had an enormous and corrosive influence on other nations. Bolshevism was a form of proselytizing religious—or irreligious—mania. Its effort to convert the whole of the world to the ideal of Communism was in fact very largely responsible for Fascism, Nazism, and the other forms of totalitarian government which are the reaction to Communism, though in practice akin to it.

I quote the following passage from what I then wrote: ". . . Nevertheless, its (Bolshevism's) power is an ever-present nightmare to the small States closest to the Soviet Republic, whose armaments are perforce maintained on a scale adequate to meet this threat; and it is apparently rapidly spreading and tainting a considerable portion of the world."

For my first years in College I had rooms that had been Lord Curzon's. His reputation as a Fellow did not at all bear out the character popularly attributed to him. There was none of the hauteur and "superior person" attitude, of which one has heard so much—

probably assumed to hide the continuous pain he suffered. In College, he was just one of the members of the family, friendly and genial. This was my own experience of him during the 1914–1918 War, when I often met him at the War Cabinet. The last time I saw him was at a Cabinet meeting after the war, in 1919, when he greeted me as an old friend: "Why, Swinton, how are you? It seems like old times to see you here." There was no arrogance, social or intellectual.

At Oxford, once again I was a new boy, but not too shy to register impressions, or ask for guidance. I found everyone, both in my College and outside, most helpful when consulted. It did not, however, seem to occur to anyone that a new boy could be so ignorant as not to know the ropes. Advice, therefore, was not proffered, and I had to make my way by a process of trial and error through the not very numerous or complicated traditions and tabus of life at Oxford.

My predecessor, the late Professor Spenser Wilkinson, who had had a great deal to do with the Services, particularly the Army, and had for years been a very keen volunteer himself, alone divined my perplexity in this strange new world and, figuratively speaking, took me by the hand, as the senior subaltern of a regiment does to the last joined. He told me what was done and how to do it, and what was not done. I owe it to his kindness, insight and guidance that I avoided many pitfalls. Academically, he was a hard man to follow. His knowledge of Napoleon and his methods was outstanding, as was his acquaintance with the Austro–Prussian War of 1866 and the Franco–German War. Of these subjects he had forgotten more than I could ever hope to know. A competent Greek

scholar, he also knew German thoroughly and French and Italian. He liked talking, and if you would let him, would keep you up till the small hours with his reminiscences. He had been intimate with many of our leading naval and military thinkers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and was a learned man whose opinions were valued.

My Chair carried with it the award of the Degree of M.A. by decree. In other words, I automatically became a full-blooded M.A. and not an M.A. *honoris causa*. This involved matriculation before the degree was granted. Both ceremonies were of course novel to me, as was all the attendant mumbo jumbo. I was again placed in the care of the Dean of my College, who was to be responsible for producing me before the Vice-Chancellor, correctly attired at the appointed time. I took pains to fix with him the place and time of parade. I have a constitutional dislike of appearing at any official function improperly dressed and equipped. Yet I could not obtain from my cicerone any definite instruction as to the garb I should wear. I therefore took the precaution of borrowing gowns and hoods of every type available in the College and having them hung up outside the smoking room. At the sight of this dazzling array the Dean's eyes protruded. "What are all these for?" he asked. "Mr. Dean," I replied, "you can take your choice. I do not like to be caught . . ." After some hesitation, he selected the ordinary mortar-board and black gown of an M.A.

In the room, where I awaited the Vice-Chancellor of the University, were one or two officials and two undergraduates—one an Indian—about to undergo the same experience. My Dean handed over my vile

body with a piece of paper, and I was then asked to sign, my first name in Latin, in a rather austere register ruled in columns. I noticed in the column on the right hand the sum of twelve guineas. This was to me a quite unexpected bonanza. Good place, Oxford!, I thought, and enquired when I was to be paid. To my disappointment I was told that I had to do the paying. Not so good! Now I had not been warned of this impending summons to stand and deliver, and I had not got the wherewithal on me. Concealing my chagrin, I asked "When?" "Now," was the reply. "Wrong: guess again," said I. In the upshot I was trusted to forward my cheque later.

The Vice-Chancellor then entered. I sprang up smartly to attention; and received a shock when he welcomed me with the words, "Good afternoon, Professor." This was the first time I had been publicly addressed by this title. He then pronounced a few words in Latin; and I was handed a fat book. With memories of Courts-Martial, I naturally put it to my lips, but was hastily stopped—"That's not a Testament. It's a copy of the University Statutes." It was the most expensive book I ever bought. By the time this particular part of the ceremony was over, the responsibility of my guide had apparently ceased, for like the snark, he had silently vanished. I then passed into another room, where I was asked to sign another register. In this were the figures £4. 4s. But I had been "larned". I said simply, "Can I send a cheque later?"

The formal Degree ceremony, which was conducted by the Vice-Chancellor immediately afterwards in the beautiful Divinity School, did not call for my presence. However, I attended, and was much impressed by

hearing my name read out in Latin, and by the number of times that the Vice-Chancellor and the two gentlemen, one on each side of him, whom I discovered were Proctors, took off their mortar-boards and bowed. That evening I sent a cheque for sixteen guineas to the Chest of the University of Oxford. I was a fully fledged Master of Arts.

A Fellowship at All Souls is generally accepted, I believe, to be the Blue Riband of the academic career at Oxford. The bulk of the members consist of "Examination Fellows", namely those graduates of the University who are elected once a year, in the Michaelmas term, after an extremely severe competitive examination. I have taken part in many examinations and this is one of the most searching and fairest I know. The number admitted on each occasion is either one, two or three. The subjects "offered" are Law, History, Philosophy and Economics. There are, in addition, a certain number of Fellowships given without examination, for research and for distinguished service to scholarship or in public life, and to ex-Fellows, called Quondams, who may be re-elected. And lastly, there are the Fellows who owe their election to some University Chair, of which the stipend is paid from College funds. I was in this category.

I do not suppose that for any of the Examination Fellows the life at the College could be quite so strange as at first it was to me. They had had, after all, three or four years in which to soak in the Oxford tradition and atmosphere. To many undergraduates All Souls is a mysterious place. But it is realized that election postulates a very good brain and a high standard of education. There is perhaps a slight, but not un-

natural, tendency on the part of the younger men, who have attained the greatest honour which the University has to offer, to look upon themselves as being a cut above the ordinary mortal. This is not a form of Pharisaism peculiar to them. It is a natural attitude of any body whose members form a band of the elect. In the Army the same accusation used in the past to be brought against the officers of the Royal Engineers, who—if competitive examination tests are of any value—were, in brains and education—and, I suppose, still are—above those of the other branches of the Service. It has also been levelled against the officers who had graduated at the Staff College.

At All Souls the conversation is on a high level; and the most junior Fellow does not hesitate to lay down the law on any subject. Although the atmosphere corresponds in many ways with that of a military mess, there is a great difference between the two, chiefly in the freedom of expression of opinion by the youngest, which is astonishing to a soldier. In the old days, at least, in many regimental messes, except the Guards, a junior officer, unless invited, was not expected to give an opinion until he had had two or three years' service. In all the colleges at Oxford, I assume the younger a man is the more he takes the floor. Another striking point to the soldier is the greater importance attached at the University to scholarship, and the written and spoken word, than to deeds. That, I suppose, is inevitable.

A propos of politics, it may be imagined that the “King and Country” debate in the Oxford Union in February 1933, shocked me badly. Not only for the spirit which it seemed to show (which was not borne out by the 1939–45 War) but because I realized

what the effect such a resolution, debated at the cultural and intellectual centre of England, would have on the Intelligence Departments of every nation which had any armed forces. It was noted. And I have always been of the opinion that it materially contributed in certain countries to the conviction that whatever happened Britain would not fight. This and the fatuous Peace Ballot had a good deal to answer for.

Within a month of coming up I had attended, as a guest, a debate at the Union. I cannot remember what it was on. I was impressed, but not altogether favourably. The manner of the conduct of the proceedings was admirably modelled on that of Parliament. The forensic manner of the speakers, their delivery and fluency were remarkable. But my admiration was tempered by the reflection that although the majority of the speakers were not old enough to have had any personal experience, they did not allow that fact to temper their flood of oratory. No doubt these debates do give budding politicians practice and a facility for public speaking.

To show the catholicity and non-exclusiveness of All Souls and the fact that sheer intellectual merit is the qualification for election, and not any question of kinship to the Founder—as used to be the case in by-gone days—or birth, or religion, or political opinions, it is necessary only to mention that among the members of the College are Protestants, Catholics, Dissenters and Jews; there are a Frenchman, a Montenegrin, an Indian, and some who have worked their way up from the elementary schools by dint of scholarships. So far as the old school tie is concerned, a large number of Fellows were until recently Wykehamists, followed by Etonians. Rugby, Harrow, Haileybury, Marlborough,

Merchant Taylors, University College School, Bradford Grammar School, etc., have also provided their quota. As obtains in the University at large, a fair proportion of the younger men belong politically to the Left.

An ex-member of another college insists that Balliol is world-famous and All Souls entirely parochial. That is as may be. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and I will not stress the number of diplomats, legal luminaries, archbishops, bishops, etc., etc., who are proud to have been Fellows of All Souls.

One of my regrets in leaving London had been that Oxford was too far away for me to use my Club—the United Service—very often. But I soon found that in my College I had a club as good as any in London. Before the war, one could entertain one's guests to luncheon or dinner in an unique setting, and put them up for the night if desired. Saturdays and Sundays are the great nights, and here, at some time or another, many of the distinguished visitors to Britain made their way. Dinner was taken in the Hall, wine and dessert in the Common Room, coffee and smokes in two other rooms. It was a kind of procession. In recent years this has been simplified. Three times a year we have a Gaudy, when the wine is "on the house", and dinner is always free to Fellows.

The scene in Hall, especially on a Gaudy night, which is a family affair when there are no guests, or on a Saturday or Sunday when there are, is impressive, even in Oxford. The long table down the centre and the cross table at the top are both full. There being no undergraduates, there is strictly speaking no high table, as at other colleges, the only seats reserved being those of the Warden and Sub-Warden. At the end of

the meal, when the electric light concealed behind the cornice is switched off, the sole illumination is the mellow effulgence of candles in silver candelabra reflected in the surface of the oak tables, which no more than reveals the sombre panelling of the walls and the many portraits of ex-Wardens and other former dignitaries of the College, from the Founder, Archbishop Chichele, downwards. In the Common room, the atmosphere, if less impressive, is intimate in its stately comfort. The mahogany table reflects from its highly polished surface, better than oak, the soft light of the candles. Glancing round, I have often been reminded of that period of English life so charmingly depicted by Dendy Sadler and have wondered how the scene in which I was taking part would survive the rapidly changing order of things, when old institutions and old customs are so quickly disappearing.

It is remarkable to observe the mellowing influence of the College. All its members are not of the same birth or class. By no means a mutual admiration society, it is a melting-pot, redolent of learning, culture and tradition. And may it remain so. It is to be hoped that André Maurois and Paul Morand are correct in their opinion that it will be a long time before the old-established social amenities and ceremonial vanish from English life.

Among the old College customs which have died out within the last few years is the brewing by the College of its own ale. The same beer is now produced from the same recipe by an outside brewer. There are ale and old ale. The first is very good and moderately strong; the second—as sweet as honey, as thick as milk and as strong as brandy—is superb, and is drunk almost as a liqueur. Both are served in round-bot-

tomed silver tumblers of a special design. The collection of these is large, as it was customary for each departing Fellow to present a tumbler engraved with the College arms, the name of the donor and the date of the gift. The earliest of these bears the date 1672. The splendid old college silver is almost unique, although little has survived the Civil War.

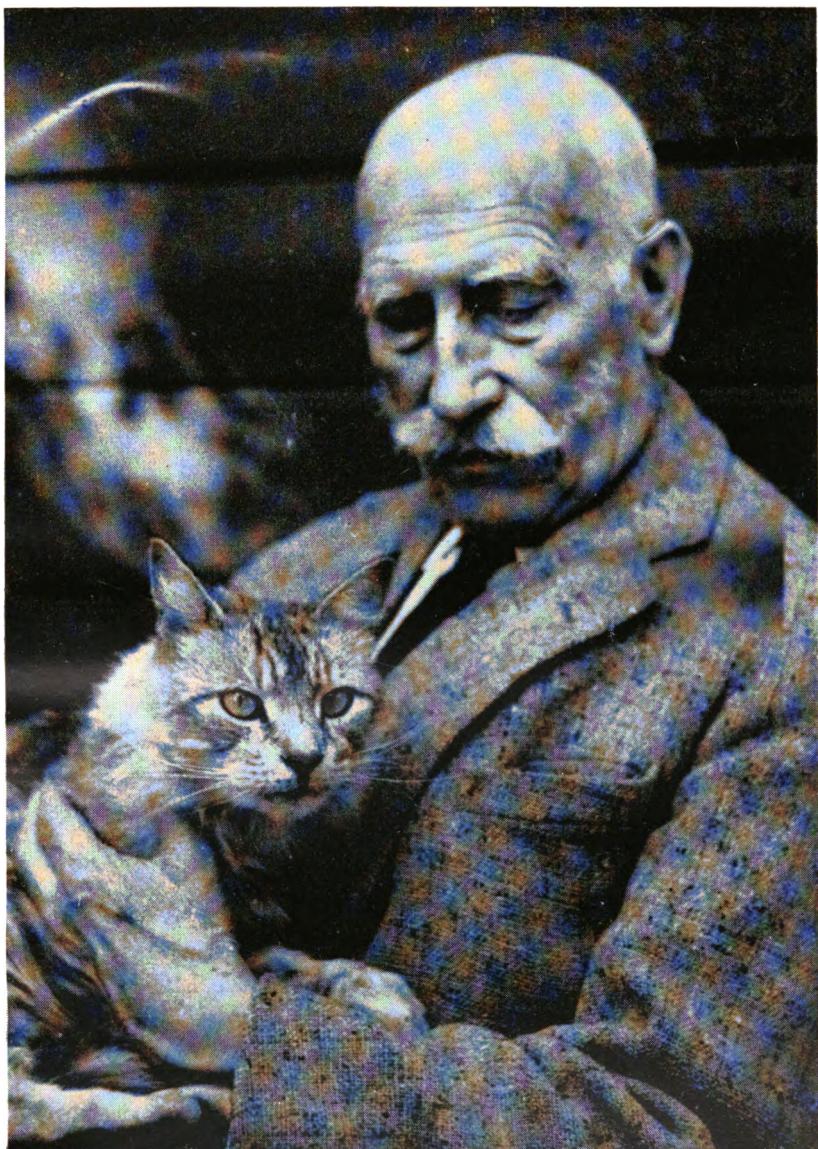
And here I should like to pay a tribute to the College servants. From the Manciple at their head, down to the messenger boys, the service is carried out with such good will that one cannot but regard all the staff as friends.

There exists a pleasing practice of introducing guests by name. If there are many this cannot always be done; and occasional mistakes as to identity are bound to be made. At lunch one day I was seated next a particularly interesting man. He was a stranger to me, but obviously not to the College, where he seemed quite at home. Our conversation turned to India, a topic on which he was very informative. I said, "You seem to know a good deal about India. Have you ever been there?" "I was Viceroy," he chuckled. He was the late Lord Chelmsford, afterwards Warden of the College. A man of very varied experience and great distinction, he was simple and unassuming in manner. No one would have guessed the exalted positions he had held.

The College is a species of democracy, all those belonging, whatever their position or attainments, being on an equality, with the exception of the Warden, who is elected and holds the post until he reaches the statutory age for retirement, and the Sub-Warden, who is appointed in rotation for two years. In due course I was elected Dean. This position differs from the

corresponding post in other colleges as there are no undergraduates and therefore no call for disciplinary action. The duties of the Dean are therefore practically nominal, and lie chiefly in reading the Lessons in Chapel, and in presenting Fellows for the degrees which they had gained before their election. He can either read the Lessons himself or call upon two of the Fellows present to do so. To me it was suggestive of a sergeant giving orders on parade. On one occasion I named two of the occupants of the stalls facing me. "Chelmsford", and for the second Lesson, "Headlam". One after the other they "fell out", stepped quietly to the Lectern, did their duty and resumed their places in the ranks. The first was an ex-Viceroy of India; the second the late Bishop of Gloucester. Never before had I given orders to persons of such eminence, nor had them more promptly obeyed.

The Degree days take place two or three times every term, at a convocation of the University held in the Sheldonian theatre. It is an ancient and interesting ceremony, but one lacking in that precision and pep which characterize similar Service functions. Whilst the two proctors, following the very old ritual, prowl up and down so that their gowns may be plucked by any creditors of undergraduates before the latter are graduated, a Dean's part, when called upon, is to advance with the victim or victims from his college, holding in his right hand the right hand of one "Honоранд", and pronouncing a formula in Latin as he and his charges bow to the Vice-Chancellor and the two Proctors on his right and left. The ceremonial dignity of the scene is liable at times to be marred because when there is a large number of men from one college, the individuals sometimes move forward in a huddle.



The author, taken with Pompey, in his garden at Oxford,
September, 1948

It also happens that, when the Dean bows to the right his flock bows to the left, and vice versa. Some of the hard-boiled old hands among the Deans gabble their little Latin oration; others are quite inaudible. The proceedings are watched from the galleries by a crowd of relatives or lady friends of those getting degrees.

The first occasion on which I had to make a presentation was rather an ordeal. I had not thought of Latin for over forty years since I passed into the Shop, when I used to try to translate Tennyson's " Brook " into elegiacs. Having a bad verbal memory, I spent a long time learning the very simple formula by heart. But, unluckily, still recollecting something of Latin, I replaced one word by another having the same meaning. I stopped and corrected myself. Thank Heaven it was not a false quantity. On later meeting the Vice-Chancellor, then also the Warden of All Souls, I said in deep humiliation, " Mr. Vice-Chancellor, I wish to apologise on behalf of the nation, on behalf of the Army, the Corps of Royal Engineers, the Royal Tank Corps, Oxford University, All Souls College, and myself." " What for ? " said the puzzled V.-C. I confessed my crime. " Indeed, I didn't hear a single word you said." And I the man at whose roar thousands had once trembled! As a matter of fact, by the end of the long-drawn-out function, with its repetitions in Latin, the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors must often be pop-eyed and dazed.

The processions of the University dignitaries escorting the honorands to the Sheldonian theatre, where the Honorary Degrees are conferred by the Chancellor, have always excited my military prejudices, nourished on tight uniforms, feathers, plumes, long boots and

clanking spurs. Indeed, the flapping gowns and head-dresses and the shuffling gait led to a—not too serious—suggestion on my part that the wearers should march in step, in fours, and be led by a mouth organ or Jew's-harp if the University could not run to a band. This was not received with any enthusiasm.

As Dean, I had the privilege on different occasions of receiving, conducting and helping to robe Maréchal Foch and F.-M. Lord Milne, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, for their honorary degrees. Foch, whom I met in the First World War, with his square body in Maréchal's uniform and doctor's gown, was a striking figure. He appreciated the Honour conferred on him, and thoroughly enjoyed the ceremonial. The University, too, felt honoured by the presence of this great soldier and first Allied Commander.

Some time later I had reason to be grateful for my profound classical erudition. It was the anniversary of the Japanese naval victory of Tsushima in 1905, and a Japanese naval captain, who was attending my lectures, invited me to dinner to celebrate the event. We had a sumptuous meal in a private room of the Randolph Hotel. Over our brandy and cigars, when the waiter left the room, my host rose and carefully locked the door. Then, bowing, he opened a small bag and took out something wrapped in silk. When a second wrapping—a silk Japanese flag—was unwound it revealed a dirk! I had then to brace myself. Had I, by any mischance, said or done anything derogatory to the Japanese Emperor or the Japanese armed forces? And was I to be handed this weapon and politely requested to commit *hara-kiri*? I thought first of the hotel carpet. I then thought of the honour of a British officer and determined, if I had to die, to die like one.

Bowing again, my host handed me the sheathed weapon. His English was very meagre, consisting largely of smiles and the sucking-in of breath. But I made out that the dirk was one of several, fashioned at the Emperor's command, by the leading Japanese swordsmith from a gun of the main battery of the battleship *Mikasa*, to be presented to distinguished foreigners. The *Mikasa* was Admiral Togo's flagship during the action. I was adjudged to be worthy of such an honour, as having been responsible for the British Official Naval and Military History of the Russo-Japanese War. I breathed and smiled again.

But there immediately presented itself another predicament. What does one say on such a tremendous occasion? I could think of no regulation or formula. Meanwhile, my host was awaiting some response on my part. I had a brain-wave. I called to mind the motto of the Corps of Royal Engineers. Drawing the vorpal blade I stood stiffly to attention, gazed up at the ceiling, gave the blade a smacking kiss, and said in a sepulchral tone, "*Quo fas et gloria ducunt!* Banzai!" I again kissed the weapon and snapped it into its sheath with a bang. The Japanese officer clearly accepted this as the correct British ritual. We both smiled and bowed once more. Honour was saved!

I have now been a Fellow of All Souls for over a quarter of a century and have during that time met here, and elsewhere, many personages who have left their mark on our national life.

Among Fellows of the College, and prominent until his death in 1947, was that distinguished historian, the Chichele Professor of Modern History, College Libra-

rian and Burgess of the University, Sir Charles Oman. Academically and physically he was outstanding. With his great stature and fine head he was one of the landmarks of Oxford. His memory was amazing and his knowledge encyclopædic, extending far beyond the limits of his own subject. He was the author of many books, the best known of which, perhaps, is his history of the Peninsular War in six volumes. It was always a delight to hear Oman make a remark at a College meeting and then see him look round to mark its effect, with the twinkling eye of a rogue elephant. Another remarkable figure in my time was the late Sir William Holdsworth, father of the rowing blue who stroked the Oxford boat for four years, joined the R.A.F. and crashed to his death early on in the last War. Holdsworth was author of the monumental *History of English Law*. He, also, was a big man physically, with a red walrus moustache, which caused him to be known affectionately to some as "Old Bill". Profoundly learned, he was, in addition, blessed with a sense of humour, and was eminently a man with whom to go tiger shooting. Once, at my Club in London, as we entered the smoking-room after lunch, I was greeted by several boon companions with "Hallo, bloody Professor!" (The title of "Professor" is always a source of mirth to the military mind.) After a repetition of this ultra friendly greeting, Holdsworth came to my rescue and interposed, "I'd have you know, gentlemen, that I also am a bloody professor!" which confession was warmly greeted and duly celebrated. Holdsworth never recovered from his grief at his son's death, and died in 1943, shortly after receiving the Order of Merit from the King for his great services to the Law.

Some of the Fellows I had met individually, long before I knew the College itself. To my brief encounter with Lionel Curtis I have already alluded. The late Geoffrey Dawson I had also run across in Johannesburg during the South African War, when he was one of Lord Milner's "Kindergarten". Some of my Irregular officers, indeed, who knew not Oxford, thought that Balliol College was synonymous with the University. Dawson was Editor of the *Johannesburg Star* and then Editor of *The Times* for many years; and partly through that association and the fact that his predecessor, Buckle, was also a Fellow of All Souls, the "Thunderer" was sometimes called "The All Souls College Magazine". But, though he was so often behind the scenes, Dawson was discreet and was not given to disclosures. Lord Brand I knew in Washington in 1917-1918, when he was dealing with finance and munitions supply. The Master of the Rolls, Lord Greene, I had encountered in 1919, when I was pleading my case before the Royal Commission on Awards to Inventors. He with Lord Simon, afterwards Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Chancellor of the Exchequer, both represented other claimants. Greene is a brilliant advocate and a courteous opponent. When we were both pleading in the Great Hall of Lincoln's Inn he wore a wig, and when I met him later as a colleague I did not recognize him. The Fellows trained in the Law form a strong contingent and, as a soldier, I had to suffer some good-humoured banter. But, for the credit of the Army, it was usually agreed that honours were easy.

Sir Arthur Salter I got to know during the 1914-1918 War when he was working at the Ministry of Shipping. Again, in the World War, the Government

had the advantage of his unique experience and wisdom in a similar capacity. A Burgess for Oxford for the past thirteen years, the House of Commons now has to suffer the loss of a most valuable member, owing to the abolition of the University representation. This spiteful political manœuvre has deprived the country of the services of many outstanding personalities.

After hostilities had ceased, All Souls entertained at various Encænia luncheons many of the leading figures of the war. Among them, General Eisenhower honoured Oxford by his presence: the late Mr. John Winant, formerly American Ambassador, Mr. Averill Harriman, Field-Marshal Lord Montgomery, Lord Tedder, Field-Marshal Sir William Slim, and many others; and I was particularly happy to see there two very old friends: Mr. Winston Churchill, whom I was able to thank personally for his unfailing courtesy and attention to any propositions I put before him during that period of stress; and the late Field-Marshal Earl Wavell—another with a superlative gift for friendship. When the history of the War comes to be written, Lord Wavell's name will be high among those who laid the foundations of victory. To him fell many thankless and hopeless tasks—all tackled with the courage which was one of his outstanding characteristics. England can ill afford to lose such a man.

Of the Wardens during my time Dr. Francis Pember, an ex-member of the Parliamentary Bar, was the first. A fine classical scholar, he was a brilliant conversationalist and full of classical tags and allusions. In 1932 he was succeeded by the late Lord Chelmsford, who died suddenly in 1934, to our grief. I had a long talk with him on the morning of his death. He was followed by Dr. W. G. S. Adams, an authority on

political theory and institutions, and a great moving force in social welfare; and he, in his turn, in 1945, by Professor B. H. Sumner, an expert in Russian history. There are many other Fellows I recall, but they are too numerous to mention individually.

There is an interesting convention that when a Fellow becomes Warden he ceases to be a member of the Common Room, though he sits at the head of the table after dinner, and becomes in a way apart from the rest of the College. No one rises until he has taken his departure, the signal for which, on Gaudy nights, is given by his health being proposed by the Lord Mallard, the Head of the Common Room, a very important College dignitary. I have always imagined that this was a custom established in the old days as leave for the Fellows to "roister", if so disposed. The Lord Mallard—at present Sir Dougal Malcolm—holds his office for an unspecified period. He is what I would call the "Master of the Revels", and after the Gaudy dinners he sings the College song of the Swapping Mallard.

There are, naturally, deep contrasts between the academic and the military outlook on life. I can give one illustration. Being a director of a business which took me to Paris two or three times a year, I mentioned at dinner at my Club that I was catching the night train for Paris. A member within hearing looked up, smiled knowingly and said, "Give her my love." Before my next journey, which I made direct from Oxford, my announcement that I was crossing for Paris that night produced the immediate reaction, "Are you reading a paper at the Sorbonne?"

I have so far confined my remarks to the superficial impressions made on a middle-aged soldier by his

sudden translation into the very heart of Oxford. This is no presumptuous effort to assess or describe the life of the University, or its influence on that of the nation. As regards the University—I feel that, in its corporate capacity, it is the most broad-minded, liberal and generous institution imaginable. There is no pettiness or unnecessary fussing. In fact, I have occasionally been alarmed by the apparently casual manner in which important functions are approached. There have been no clouds of paper instructions, orders or hectic counter-orders. And yet when the moment arrived, things have passed off without disorder.

All Souls perhaps has a certain breadth of view, due to the fact that many of its Fellows and guardians have not only academic and scholastic distinction, but are also in the service of the Church and State, in law, politics and journalism.

I had often observed, without comprehending it, the lasting hold that Oxford—"the Home of Lost Causes"—maintains on Oxford men. Now, after being there for over a quarter of a century, I partly understand it. At any rate, I feel its influence myself. It has got me. I do not pretend to explain anything so intangible as this sentiment, though real and powerful. It seems to be compounded of the tradition of centuries, and an atmosphere which derives from that tradition, and the charm of the place itself. The beauty of the academic portion of what is now an industrial city, the dignity and repose of its old colleges, with their venerable buildings and calm, secluded quadrangles, their velvety lawns and gardens gay with flowers, are a feast to the eye and a sedative to the nerves. To pass from the noisy streets through the portals of a college, into the calm detached air of

the quad, and the silence, save for the soporific hum of a mowing machine and the chimes and striking of clocks all round, backed by the deep boom of Christ-church's Great Tom, is to enter a different world. It is a far cry from the guardroom and the barrack square.

Though a college is no lamasery, I sometimes feel that the almost monastic atmosphere is a little too remote from the bustle of the outside world, and may lead to an inbred aloofness remote from realities. But it lends itself to study and thought, and encourages culture and the attainment of knowledge.

From the Common Room at All Souls one can, during dinner in summer, look out across the quad and on to the stately dome of the Radcliffe Camera, an annexe of the world-famous Bodleian Library, close by. On the right is the imposing façade of the college library endowed by Colonel Codrington and designed by Hawksmoor, and on the left the chapel and hall. Except the chapel, the buildings in this quadrangle are of a much later period than the rest of the college, and the difference is striking. On a moonlight night, the dome of the Radcliffe and the spire of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin alongside, present a sight not to be forgotten. Seeing it so often, perhaps we tend to grow blasé at an ethereal scene of transcendent beauty. Facing the quad, high up in the wall of the Codrington library front, Wren's huge sundial, with its motto, "*Pereunt et imputantur*", is a constant reminder to us all.

I was appointed to my chair in October 1925, for five years, subject to extension. I was given a second period of five years, taking me beyond the normal age limit of sixty-five, and then a further extension to

July, 1939. The end of my academic career coincided with the outbreak of the Second World War. Since that time I have been Professor Emeritus (an honorary position) and have continued to live in Oxford. I have been made a Distinguished Fellow of my College, and therefore still enjoy all the privileges I had before.

I have so far written of the University and my College, but have said nothing of the human element for which the whole place exists—the young men, for whom the University was largely founded.

Having been an instructor of young officers of all branches of the Army at Chatham, and of gentlemen cadets at the Shop, I am able in some degree to compare the youths destined for a military career with those mostly preparing for civil life, academic or not. The budding soldiery came largely from military stock, with its Service traditions and possibly narrow point of view, and a tendency to accept whatever is laid down by authority. Their attitude was not critical of accepted dogma. Originality of thought was not acclaimed.

Undergraduate youth, at all events at Oxford, is rather inclined to be critical at an age when it has not had time to gain any experience. I gather that one object of the University is to encourage the faculty of analysis, criticism and a judicial attitude—in fact, a liberally broad outlook. But when I found that a certain tutor was lecturing in my subject, I enquired what a pupil was to think if his professor had certain views which were diametrically opposed to those of the tutor. The answer was that this difference taught the youth to discriminate and exercise his own judgement. To my mind, at his age he would be only confused and puzzled. In my opinion, also, a weakness of the

tutorial system, otherwise so excellent, is that, though by its system of instruction through essay and theses it tests the reasoning powers and teaches the capacity of self-expression, it over-emphasizes the development of criticism.

I found that the intellectual average of the undergraduates was much the same as that of cadets. While the cadets I had taught at Woolwich for commissions in the R.A. and R.E. were intellectually the pick of the entrants for the Army, the men who attended my lectures at Oxford were those taking Honours, who represented a higher standard than those who aimed at a Pass Degree.

In other directions my comparison would be as follows: both types are good fellows and easy to get on with. But the University men are—or were twenty years ago—not so well mannered. They had not the advantage of a senior subaltern to wheel them into line. They showed little deference to experience or age, a courtesy which would not militate against their own “self-determination”. I consider, also, that the voluntary attendance at lectures handicaps the lecturer, and is bad for the lectured. At first I regarded a lecture as a parade and expected my audience, if they attended, to turn up punctually, whereas I found them dribbling in at any time from five minutes to the hour to ten minutes past, without apology. I then discovered that, owing to the scattered situations of the lecture rooms, it was the accepted custom for lectures to start five minutes after the hour and to stop five minutes before. But when, at 10 a.m. at the beginning of my first term, two fresh undergraduates arrived early, put their heads on their arms and proceeded, before I had started, to go to sleep straight in

front of my eyes, I thought it was time to put over some "militarism". One youth defended himself, saying that he often went to sleep. "Not at *my* lectures, son",—and I never saw him again.

Outwardly, there has been a change in the appearance of youth, both in the Army and in the University. This, no doubt, has been largely due to, but not entirely brought about by, the general difficulty of living caused by two wars, and by the reduced circumstances of the class of those entering both walks of life. A greater proportion are dependent on earning their own living for the future, and are more concerned with gaining all possible advantage from what the University has to offer than with the desirability of giving something in return. Very many now reach the University from the elementary schools by the help of scholarships provided by the State or otherwise made available to them. They are more serious and earnest than were their predecessors, for instance, when I first saw Oxford in 1888. With my Service prejudices it came as a shock to me to encounter so many long-haired youngsters of the Arty and Crafty type.

Another thing that has greatly puzzled me is the system of study. In the Army we used to work hard when doing duty, and not when on leave. At Oxford there are so many distractions during term that it is remarkable that any work is done at all. The result is that the vacations, totalling six months of the year, are used to make up for the months that the locust has eaten.

But hark! I hear the booming of Great Tom. It is midnight! Time for old boys to be in bed!

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